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Becoming the *Ars Poetica*

THE *ARS POETICA* stands in a lineage of ancient works conceived of as repositories for the essentials of poetics, extending back to the writings of Aristotle, Neoptolemus of Parium, and Philodemus, and forward to pseudo-Longinus *On the Sublime*.[1] Horace's 476-line poem was revered for over fifteen hundred years as the indispensable guide for practicing poets;[2] it provided a blueprint for efforts at "updated" rules of literary composition; and it inspired numerous famous translators and imitators, among them Geoffrey of Vinsauf, Ben Jonson, Nicolas Boileau, Alexander Pope, and many other European and American writers. From the *Ars Poetica* have been quarried such oft-quoted phrases as *in medias res* ("into the middle of things"), *ut pictura poesis* ("poetry is like a painting"), and *purpureus . . . pannus* ("a purple patch"), or the dictum that poetry should be both pleasing and useful.[3] The *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* opens its entry on the work: "It would be impossible to overestimate the importance of Horace's *Ars Poetica* (*Art of Poetry*) for the subsequent history of literary criticism."[4] And yet this poem has proven hard to love for recent readers: it is "unfashionable today: unfashionable even amongst classicists, and certainly so amongst non-specialists."[5] As its ostensible value as "a kind of literary 'Magna Carta'"[6] receded and it ceased to be widely regarded as a document that could ever sincerely aid in literary composition, the *Ars Poetica* came to develop an entrenched reputation of being tedious and devoid of artistry, as if

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1. Dated tentatively to the first century CE; see further Porter 2016 and my chapter 4. On the *AP* in relation to Aristotle and Neoptolemus, see especially Brink 1963: 43–150.

2. Overviews at Friis-Jensen 2007: 300–302, Laird 2007: 132–33, McGann 2007: 305, Money 2007: 321.

3. The poem's "invariably succinct and incisive" precepts (Campbell 1924: 238) are often noted, as at Brink 1981: 8, Armstrong 1993: 185, Hardison and Golden 1995: 41, Leitch 2010: 119.

4. Leitch 2010: 119.

5. Moul 2010: 175.

6. Laird 2007: 133; cf. Lowrie 2014: 121, "a virtual bible of poetics in its reception."

in relentless perpetuation of Scaliger's "ars sine arte tradita," an "artless Art."[7] This duality is inevitably tied up with the understanding of it as modeled upon earlier Greek works, a relation that both granted the *Ars Poetica* a greater standing and yet doomed it to be seen as "an anthology of previous ideas, not a system of thought in which each idea has its place as a living and flexible member of an organically unified discourse."[8] The literary scholar Lionel Trilling, for example, branded the poem "a crashing bore and a disaster to literature," all while expressing surprise at "the anomaly of its having been written by a great poet" and confessing himself to be otherwise "engaged and delighted and quite often moved" by Horace.[9] Others have pretended that the work hardly exists.[10] As a result, despite being "the only classical essay on literary criticism that has been known with something like continuity from the date of its composition to the present day,"[11] the *Ars Poetica* has been the subject, aside from the present effort, of only one book in English,[12] having been more often considered alongside Horace's two so-called "literary epistles" (*Epistles* 2.1 and 2.2), lumped in with them to its detriment since its epistolary qualities are thus fronted, its many others obscured.[13]

My aim in this study is twofold. First, continuing the approach of Brink, though to rather different ends, I consider the *Ars Poetica* as a complete and exceptional literary achievement in its own right.[14] I work to show that the poem possesses an internal unity that supersedes its explicit topical breaks and that

7. Scaliger 1594: 878; see Frischer 1991: 10–11 on the persistence of Scaliger's critique into the twentieth century (it is repeated at, e.g., Bate 1952: 46).

8. Armstrong 1968: 8.

9. Trilling 1970: 131 (in Brophy et al. 1970).

10. In his monumental *Horace*, for example, Fraenkel 1957 devotes a full chapter to every book of poems except the *AP* (he otherwise omits only *Epist.* 2.2).

11. Hardison and Golden 1995: 3.

12. I refer to Frischer 1991. This book may be characterized as one of the first instances of digital humanistic scholarship in the Classics, and it is concerned largely with determining the date of the *AP*, the identity of its addressees and other "interpretative implications of chronology," and the poem's genre; promised further volumes (xi) seem never to have been published.

13. E.g., Rudd 1989, Kilpatrick 1990. Armstrong's 1993 forty-seven-page essay and Oliensis's 1998 chapter in her monograph stand out for their consideration of the *AP* on its own terms.

14. See especially Brink 1963: 244–71, 1971: 445–523; while valuing the *AP*'s striking and often-overlooked internal cohesion, his focus remains on the poem as a work of poetics and literary didaxis. Others have naturally also made the observation that the *AP* is itself a poem, and one worthy of study, e.g., Wimsatt 1970 (in Brophy et al. 1970), Williams 1972: 40–41, Segura Ramos 1989: 119–20, Armstrong 1993, Hardison and Golden 1995: 4, 239, Oliensis 1998, Russell 2006, Hösle 2009: 63–64, and Hajdu 2014, yet as recently as 2010 Moul was able to say that "the poem itself—what it was for, or how it is meant to be read—is not often well discussed" (175).

its coherence emerges through recursivity—judicious echoes and re-echoes of individual words, sounds, and images. Accordingly, the *Ars Poetica*'s "nutritive content"[15] may be found to lie not in its prescriptive and often heavy-handed advice but rather in certain subtle thematic strands that weave their way through the length of the poem: how best to teach, how to learn successfully, and what obligations those bound by ties of blood or friendship bear one another. Second, I elucidate the key place of the *Ars Poetica* in the Horatian corpus, in particular its ties to Horace's *Satires*, such that the two collections form complementary bookends to the poet's career. The *Ars Poetica*'s thematic strands take up the overt concerns of the *Satires*, and while in the *Satires* discussions of human behavior often conceal reflections on literature, in the *Ars Poetica* literature can prove a cipher for human behavior. It becomes clear that in Horace's worldview, all human activity, whether living or producing art, is to be governed by the same principles: moderation and propriety are vital, as are self-critique, caution, and deliberate care. Finally, surveying the poem's *Nachleben* and reception, I endeavor to show that generations of readers have understood the *Ars Poetica* on precisely the terms outlined here. The poem has suffered to excess from the notion that it once served as a manual or handbook, and I work to show that this surprisingly persistent and widespread view of its historical purpose, which lodges no doubt in its centuries-long usage as a school text, is at odds with the consistent appreciation of it by many readers and writers as subtle, vibrant, and engaging—a view reflected in its robust reception tradition.

Underlying my argument for the poem's completeness and internal coherence is the fact that I see its entire material present in nuce in its opening ten lines. The first three chapters of the four that make up the body of the book, "Reading the *Ars Poetica*," thus each take up a pivotal theme originating from a word or words judiciously placed in the opening vignette and follow it the length of the poem. *Humano* ("human"), the first word and the title of chapter 1, heralds the *Ars Poetica*'s concern with all that living entails, thus casting the scope of the work far beyond poetry from the start. As the poem progresses this is borne out by Horace's striking focus on human emotions, on life cycles (whether of people or words), on nature and human nature, and on spoken language, all of which are given far greater prominence than seems justified in the ostensible context of creating believable characters for the stage. Horace's concern, I argue, is with all human endeavor—the *ars vivendi* ("art of living"). If the *Ars Poetica* is read for how it expresses itself, moreover, rather than merely for what it says, it emerges as an ideal exemplum of art, the whole proving seamless and lending itself to being remade in new ways by every reader and upon every reading. Fascinated and frustrated in equal measure by the *Ars Poetica*,

15. To borrow the phrase applied by Gellar-Goad 2012: 27 to Lucr. *DRN*.

Goethe wrote, "Dieses problematische Werk wird dem einen anders vorkommen als dem andern, und jedem alle zehn Jahre auch wieder anders."[16]

"*Pisones*," the family name of the addressees, provides the title of the second chapter, in which I contend that Horace subjects the *Pisones* to a far less gentle handling than has been generally acknowledged, and one in line with his aggressive treatment at times of addressees and other figures in his *Satires* and *Epistles*. I further explore how, in dedicating his poem to a unit consisting of a father and two sons, Horace is able to make the father-son relationship a central narrative strand of the *Ars Poetica* and, with it, the theme of teaching. Ultimately, I see Horace presenting a studied evolution of his poetic persona from student-son in the *Satires*, written at the beginning of his career, in which we witness him receiving teachings from his own father, to teacher-father in the *Ars Poetica*, written at career's end. From behind his masks of *senex* and *pater*, Horace instructs and helps to shape the Piso boys (and the general reader), as his own father had done for the poet's youthful persona in *Satires* 1.4.

Two key words, *amici* ("friends") and *risum* ("laughter"), unite to form the focus of the third chapter, as Horace explores the paradox that the obligation of a true friend is to criticize, especially through laughter, even at the risk of causing pain (for in sparing a friend from short-term pain, he runs the risk of exposing him to greater pain over the long term), and that criticisms issued by a friend are necessarily true. Within the framework of Roman and, especially, Epicurean *amicitia* ("friendship"), Horace boldly negotiates for himself the position of "friend" vis-à-vis the *Pisones*, although these figures are mentioned nowhere else in his corpus. This ruse of friendship is nevertheless what allows Horace to criticize his addressees' literary talents and discourage them (along with perhaps every reader) from attempting to write poetry.

The fourth chapter treats the end of the poem. In considering the *Ars Poetica*'s final lines, I return to its opening ones, showing how they are linked through a concern with the visual and with making and creating in numerous manifestations. I propose that the *Ars Poetica* be read as an *ars poiētikē*, "art of creating," for Horace's interests lie in the overlap of all human pursuits. The source of Latin *poetica*, and with it our "poet," "poem," and "poetry," the Greek verb ποιεῖν (*poiein*) is rather more wide ranging in its senses, encompassing "make, produce, bring into existence, cause, and do," that is, making and creating in a multitude of forms. In addition, in concluding the *Ars Poetica* by indulging himself in a flight of the sublime, I argue, Horace ends the poem's conversation on creative endeavor by revealing definitively his superior and unmatchable mastery of the literary art.

16. At Keller 1916: 166, cited also at Hardie 2014: 54; see further Keller 1916: 165–69 on Goethe's interest in Horace and in the *AP*.

The book's epilogue, "Receiving the *Ars Poetica*," traces the themes and concerns of chapters 1 through 4 throughout the poem's considerable reception history, as I show that practicing poets have long discerned what many literary scholars have not: that the poem's value lies not so much in its stated contents as in its fine-spun internal unity; in its interest in human nature and the onward march of time; in the importance of criticism—both giving and receiving it—to the artistic process; and in the essential sameness of writing, of making art, and of living, loving, being, and even dying. The argument made in this study for reading the *Ars Poetica* as a literary achievement in its own right may therefore be viewed as a return to the complex, nuanced ways in which it was already read in the Middle Ages, through the sixteenth century, and into the twenty-first. The authors of the later works examined read the *Ars Poetica* as exemplifying and instantiating the sort of artistry that it opaquely commands, and they reflected this in turn through their own verses.

The Name of the Poem

Horace's poem has perhaps suffered most of all on account of its name. English-speaking readers, who know it as the *Ars Poetica*, take it up preconditioned by the expectation that we are going to encounter an "art of poetry" or The Art of Poetry.[17] As the title for an ancient work, *ars* meant "something like 'handbook' or 'statement of the principles of,'" and could thus denote a straightforward textbook, such as the *Ars Grammatica* of Donatus, or a satirical treatment of the same, as in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* (an "art of love" in the sense that it purported to be a "handbook of seduction").[18] While titles may well be conceived of as descriptions, they are more precisely "names for a purpose," and "the unique purpose of titling is hermeneutical: titles are names which function as guides to interpretation."[19] Illustrating the principle, Wilsmore suggests that the reader reconsider T. S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* as *After the War* (which would render the work historical and local), or *Macbeth* as *The King's Wife* (which would have the

17. Frischer 1991: 5 likewise observes, "What we know, or think we know, about the background of a literary work can have a decisive effect on our interpretation. Clues provided by the author—particularly the title . . . create certain expectations in us even before we read the first words of a text."

18. Hardison and Golden 1995: 26 (cf. Golden 2010: 392); Ovid repeatedly terms his work an *ars* (1.1, 1.3, 1.4 *bis*, etc.) and himself its *artifex* (1.7; on this "bogus teacher" see Watson 2007, as well as Volk 2002: 188–95, who notes also the work's traditional exclusion from the genre of didactic on the grounds of being "not serious enough," 157). On the tradition of the ancient *ars*, see Zetzel 2018, especially 162–82.

19. Fisher 1984: 288.

effect of promoting her to protagonist).[20] Titles may, accordingly, be "neutral"; they may be "underlining" or "reinforcing"; they may have the effect of "focusing" the reader as he encounters the work; they may be "undermining," "opposing," or "mystifying"; or "disambiguating," "specifying," or "allusive," referring to other works or artists or to historical events.[21] The present conundrum, then, is that it is not at all certain whether Horace himself dubbed his poem *Ars Poetica*; in fact, there is no secure evidence for what he called it, or even for whether he called it anything at all. We therefore find ourselves either approaching the work in blinkered fashion as an *ars poetica* (as which it has then so often been found wanting), or else attempting to determine how Horace intended for us to approach it.

The designations *ars poetica* and *(liber) de arte poetica* are attested early,[22] both first appearing in the first-century CE rhetorician Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*:

> usus deinde Horati consilio, qui in *arte poetica* suadet ne praecipitetur editio 'nonumque prematur in annum,' dabam his otium, ut refrigerato inventionis amore diligentius repetitos tamquam lector perpenderem. (*Epistula* 2)

> Then having made use of Horace's counsel, who in his *art of poetry* (*ars poetica*) advises, in order that an edition may not be rushed out, that it "be set aside until the ninth year," I was devoting some of my leisure to these things, in order that, with my love for my invention having been chilled, I might approach my revisited writings more carefully, like a reader.

> cui simile vitium est apud nos si quis sublimia humilibus, vetera novis, poetica vulgaribus misceat—id enim tale monstrum quale Horatius in prima parte *libri de arte poetica* fingit:

> > Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam
> > iungere si velit
> et cetera ex diversis naturis subiciat. (8.3.60)

> There is among us [Romans] a vice similar to this one [sc. Greek *Sardismos*, a mixing of dialects], if someone should mix sublime things with humble ones, old with new, poetic with common—for this is the same sort of monster as Horace creates in the first part of his book on *the art of poetry* (*liber de arte poetica*):

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20. Wilsmore 1987: 403; see also Fisher 1984, Adams 1987: 7.

21. Levinson 1985: 34–37. For Genette 1997: 79–91 titles are either "thematic," describing the work's subject matter, or "rhematic," stating its essential form (e.g., *Epigrams*, *Dictionary*, etc.).

22. Dilke 1958: 55, n2 also places value on Quintilian's testimony.

> To a human head if a painter should wish
> to join a horse's neck
> —and if he should add other things of different natures.

As secure as these two appellations might appear, whether they rise to the level of "titles" (rather than mere descriptions) must remain a matter of interpretation. Moreover, it is not clear whether the word *liber* ("book") in the second passage is essential or incidental to the entitling phrase; that is, whether Quintilian meant to call the work "A Book Concerning the Art of Poetry" (*liber de arte poetica*), or whether he is speaking of "a book" (*liber*) entitled "Concerning the Art of Poetry" (*de arte poetica*) or of "a book concerning/ about/ on" (*liber de*) "The Art of Poetry" (in which case the work's name would be *ars poetica*, once again).[23] In both passages, however, Quintilian is clearly less concerned with the *Ars Poetica* itself than with using some lines from it to illustrate a point of his own. Consequently, he provides the minimum amount of information necessary for his reader to identify the source of the quotation given. The question then becomes whether Quintilian is creating a name for the work (a simple, easily recognizable one), or whether he is referring to it by an existing (accepted, familiar) name—one bestowed on it either by Horace or by an intermediary no longer extant.

The fact that Quintilian was closer in time to Horace than we are does not by itself ensure that he possessed any insights inaccessible to us unless we suppose, without any evidence that can be pointed to, that he was drawing his information from a line unbroken since the poet's lifetime and now lost to us.[24] My sense, nevertheless, is that in this instance a continuous tradition of calling the work *ars poetica* or *(liber) de arte poetica* since the time of Horace, and which is first found attested in Quintilian, is reasonably likely, for the following reasons. First, unless the work was unfinished at the time of Horace's death—which its complete state and coherence militate against[25]—Horace himself, and his contemporaries, almost certainly called it something, for "Roman books did in general have titles" that "were often demonstrably the author's own and not those later supplied by booksellers, librarians or purchasers."[26] While this

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23. Daly 1943: 26 likewise observes that it is hard to say whether "the familiar type of prepositional phrase introduced by *de*" is "a formal title or simply a convenient manner of describing a work."

24. Bowersock 1971: 73: "the mere antiquity of a testimony is no guarantee"; on this problem more generally, see Lefkowitz 1981, rev. 2012.

25. Nevertheless, the *AP*'s perceived "want of structural completeness" has been taken by some as "proof that it was never finished," Wilkins 1896: 330.

26. Horsfall 1981: 103; he is concerned with the period from Cicero to Suetonius (see his n1). On the state of pre-Ciceronian titulature, see Daly 1943: 30–32 (who rightly points out that

practice is easily comprehensible to us in that it closely resembles our contemporary one, the situation is somewhat complicated by the fact that, as Horsfall goes on to explain, "the 'title' of a work of Greek or Latin literature can mean, in concrete and physical terms, one—or more than one—of four things:" "the tag or *sillybos*, which hung from the end of the roll as it lay on the shelf"; "a title standing at the head of the work within the roll"; "the *subscription* . . . at the end of the work"; or a title "written on the verso of the [papyrus] roll along the outside edge." What all this indicates in practice is that although Horace and his contemporaries, as stated above, likely called the work something, they may well have called it more than one something, such that the titular formulations Quintilian uses, *ars poetica* and *(liber) de arte poetica*, if we wish even to distinguish between them at all, may well have equal authority.[27]

Second, and more compelling, is that Quintilian, whose occupation as a teacher of rhetoric indicates that he was writing a form of textbook to be used in schools,[28] is evidently referring to a work that he expected to be familiar, perhaps even well known, to his readers, and he would have naturally and necessarily referred to it in a form that these relatively unsophisticated readers would have recognized (rather than employing an idiosyncratic or recherché name).[29] The designations *ars poetica* and *(liber) de arte poetica* are therefore unlikely to have been invented by Quintilian, especially in the short time since Horace's death in 8 BCE. All of this strongly suggests (in the absence of any other evidence) that the poem was known as *ars poetica* or *(liber) de arte poetica* during or very shortly after Horace's lifetime and thus that it may even have been termed

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particularly in the case of prose works, the title "was not then a matter of great concern to writers" since "there was little or nothing" from which a particular work had to be distinguished). On authors naming their own works, see Horsfall 1981: 103, Wilsmore 1987: 404, Lowrie 1997: 62–63 (on Verg. *Ecl.* 6.11–12).

27. Of *Ars Poetica* and *De Arte Poetica*, Frischer 1991: 16 says, "These titles are so similar that we need not expend any effort trying to choose between them." On the existence of multiple titles/designations for ancient works, see further Daly 1943, Horsfall 1981: 105 (who notes that works could simultaneously be known by both a title and a description of the subject matter, as in certain essays of Varro's *Logistorici*, such as *Marius de fortuna, Tubero de origine humana* [*OCD s.v.* "Varro (Marcus Terentius Varro)"], and Horace's own *Odes*, which he termed *carmina*, his *Satires*, which he referred to as *sermones*, and his *Epodes*, which he called *iambi*; cf. Horsfall 1979a).

28. *Per* Jerome (*OCD s.v.* "Quintilian [Marcus Fabius Quintilianus]"), he was the first rhetorician to receive a salary from the *fiscus* (imperial treasury), and his teaching career spanned twenty years.

29. As Laird 2007: 132 adds, Quintilian's decision to preface his book with Horace's dictum to lay aside a work for nine years before publishing it (*AP* 388–89) demonstrates "the stature of the *Ars Poetica*" for him (and his readers) already at this early date.

this by the poet himself. Moreover, the existence of Quintilian's two or three "titles," if we indeed understand them to be distinct, might suggest that Horace was himself designating rather than precisely entitling. Conversely, it is hard to see why Quintilian (or his source) would have named the poem *Ars Poetica*, to the exclusion of all other possibilities, when the poem is so rich with further modes of reading, as I aim to show in this study. (By another school of interpretation, Quintilian has been blamed for leading astray generations of readers by erroneously dubbing the poem an *ars*).[30] Quintilian's testimony is also useful for another reason, if accidentally: in employing the singular term *liber*, whether following Horace or independently, he indicates that for him, at any rate, a century after Horace's death, the *Ars Poetica* was a stand-alone work.[31]

In the centuries that immediately follow, the work is found referred to exclusively by Quintilian's phrases as *Ars Poetica* or *(Liber) De Arte Poetica*. In the second century CE, for example, Terentius Scaurus wrote his *Commentarii in Artem Poeticam*, and in perhaps the third, the scholiast Helenius Acro introduced his commentary with "conposuit istum [sc. librum] de Arte Poetica ad Pisonem quendam poetam" ("he wrote this [book] concerning the 'Art of Poetry' [or, 'Concerning the Art of Poetry'] to a certain Piso, a poet").[32] Pomponius Porphyrio, the other major Horatian scholiast, likewise termed it *de Arte Poetica*.[33] Aside from these references, however, and a handful more in Servius's commentaries on Virgil (where it is likewise termed *ars poetica*), no mentions of Horace's poem by the names *ars poetica* or *de arte poetica* (or any other, for

30. See, e.g., Campbell 1924: 235 (Quintilian's *Ars Poetica* is "misleading" because "it implies a complete and formal treatise"), Golden 2010: 392.

31. Frischer 1991: 16 takes Quintilian's comment as meaning that there was only one book of *Ars Poetica* (i.e., that Horace did not write a second book, now lost), but it equally indicates that the *AP* did not belong to *Epistles* 2. Rather bizarrely, Pseudo-Acro implies that the *AP* is a fifth book of sorts to the *Odes*: "with the preceding four books of *Odes* having been completed, he composed this fifth book concerning the Art of Poetry" ("terminatis [superioribus] libris IIII. Carminum conposuit istum quintum de Arte Poetica," Hauthal 1866: 575).

32. Hauthal 1866: 575 (page references to the scholia are provided in this study only when a scholiast's comment is not *ad loc.*). Acro's commentary is referred to throughout as "Pseudo-Acro," since it is thought to be a blend of Acro's writings with those of others.

33. Hauthal 1866: 649: "hunc librum, qui inscribitur de Arte Poetica" ("this book, which is headed 'Concerning the Art of Poetry'"; *inscribere* denotes the writing of any name, title, or dedication at the top of a work and thus can refer to any form of heading in a broad sense as well as to a title proper). The dates of these two major scholiasts on Horace are not securely established; see further Frischer 1991: 13 on them and their titles for Horace's poem, and Zetzel 2018: 149–56 on the history and dating of the commentaries.

that matter) are to be found in the four centuries following its composition.[34] In the Middle Ages, *Poetria* ("Art of a Poet," "Poetry," "Poesy") is found in place of the titles evidenced through the third century CE, with the appropriation of a term that meant exclusively "poetess" in Classical Latin.[35] The twelfth-century monk Conrad of Hirsau in his *Dialogus super auctores* plays upon this change in sense saying, as a teacher in conversation with an imaginary student, "*poetria* or *poetrida* is a woman enthusiastic about poetry; that poet [sc. Horace] is thought to have used this title [*Poetria*] for this reason, [namely] that he presents the beginning itself of his work as though a beautiful woman up above" ("poetria vel poetrida est mulier carmini studens; quo titulo hac de causa usus putatur iste poeta, quod ipsum operis sui principium quasi mulierem superne formosam premonstrat").[36] It is hard to tell whether Conrad believed (erroneously) that Horace himself had named his poem *Poetria* or how seriously he meant his explanation to be taken, yet his comment is useful for showing continued engagement with the matter of the poem's name, as well as being an early instance of confronting what titles of literary works are for and what they can do.

Outside the anglophone classical world, the picture is muddier: the *Ars Poetica* has more commonly been termed the *Epistula ad Pisones*[37] (continuing a practice seen also in the books of *Epistles*)[38] or *Epistles* 2.3, as though it were the third poem of the second book,[39] a view first attested in the *Commentator*

34. Results include those from a search of the Packard Humanities Institute database of Latin texts, which contains all Latin texts up to 200 CE, and select texts from later antiquity. The name *Pisones* (the title *Epistula ad Pisones* is discussed below) also does not occur in this period as a way of referring to the work.

35. Hauthal 1866: 574: "inde a saec. XI prodit in epigraphis et scholiis u. POETRIA" ("then, beginning in the eleventh century, it appears in the epigraphs and scholia as 'Poetria'"). *Poetria* is first attested as a feminine abstract noun with this new sense in the seventh century in a scholium to Horace's *Epistles* (Campbell 1924: 58, n1).

36. Huygens 1970: 113.

37. This is occasionally found in English-language scholarship as well, e.g., Golden 2010: 391. Frischer 1991: 8–9 (cf. 73–74, and Mañas Nuñez 2012: 235) identifies Jason De Nores as the originator of the title *Epistula ad Pisones* in his 1553 edition (Mañas Nuñez 2015 suggests that Achilles Tatius called his own 1553 work *In Q. Horatii Flacci poeticam commentarii* precisely in order to avoid engaging with the debate about the work's nature as *liber*, *ars*, or *epistula*), though Brink 1963: 233 suggests it may have been the *AP*'s original title.

38. *Epist.* 2.1 and 2.2 are known as the Epistle to Augustus and the Epistle to Florus, respectively, and the same convention is still applied to the epistles of book 1.

39. Wilkins 1896: 330, who notes that this "fashion," although it "rests upon no ancient authority," has "recently been revived" (it can be seen at, e.g., Reckford 1969, Williams 1972: 38–40, Lanternari 1974; cf. also Mañas Nuñez 2012: 225 on the tradition).

Cruquianus (who therefore deviates from the understanding found in Quintilian of the *Ars Poetica* as a stand-alone book).[40] The generic classification of the *Ars Poetica* as an epistle is ancient, seen already in the late-antique grammarian Charisius, who quotes verses from the *Ars Poetica*, attributing them to Horace's *epistulae/epistolae*.[41] Entitling the work an epistle naturally produces a different effect in the first-time reader, leading him or her to believe that what s/he is about to read is a letter in verse form, even a companion piece to the two long poems of *Epistles* 2, as the common placement of the *Ars Poetica* directly after *Epistles* 2 aids in suggesting.[42] Attempts have even been made to have one's nomenclatorial cake and eat it, too, with the poem found entitled/described as *Ars Poetica ad Pisones, De Arte Poetica ad Pisones*,[43] *Epistula Tertia Libri Secundi ad Pisones De Arte Poetica*,[44] and *Epistel über die Dichtkunst*—monstrous hybrid creations to rival that in the poem's own opening lines, that by ingeniously combining two or three elements of "epistle," "*ars*," and "*Pisones*" relieve their inventors from the responsibility of having to decide among these three titular building blocks.[45]

The discomfiting fact remains, however, that none of the titles in current use (*Ars Poetica/ De Arte Poetica, Epistula ad Pisones*, or *Epistles* 2.3), or those

40. The date of this *Commentator* is unknown, and he is named for Jacques de Crucque (Jacobus Cruquius), who in the sixteenth century published an edition containing notes, widely believed to be ancient, that he considered too insightful to have been the work of Porphyrio and Pseudo-Acro.

41. Frischer 1991: 12–16 rejects Charisius's designation on the grounds that it would "cast doubt on the otherwise unanimous witness of ancient authors," but Charisius's choice of term is salvageable on two counts. He mistakenly attributes a quotation from the *AP* to Persius's epistles ("Persius epistolarum"), which, though it has been corrected to "Horatius epistolarum," indicates that satires such as Persius wrote could be termed *epistulae*; *epistulae* may thus be understood as a synonym for "hexameters" just as *sermo* is used freely by Horace, his contemporaries, and later ancient authorities to mean both the *Satires* and *Epistles* (all in hexameters); see further Mohr 1895: 302, Horsfall 1979a: 118, 1979b: 170, 1981: 108, Ferriss-Hill 2015: 43–44. In addition, correspondences between the first poem of Lucilius's twenty-sixth book and Horace's *AP* have long been recognized, again revealing the overlap of genres; see Fiske 1913, 1920: 446–75.

42. Frischer 1991: 12. For Brink 1963, 1971, the *AP* is firmly an epistle (cf. Ferenczi 2014b: 71, Geue 2014: 148), though the view of Reinhardt 2013: 502 that the two poems of *Epistles* 2 "complement *AP* irrespective of whether we regard the latter as an epistle, too" seems more measured.

43. These would be in line with, e.g., Cicero's *De oratore ad Quintum fratrem* or *Orator ad M. Brutum*, which exploit features of personal correspondence without actually being such.

44. First in Cruquius's 1578 Antwerp edition (Frischer 1991: 11).

45. Wimsatt 1970: 135 (in Brophy et al. 1970), recalling this tradition, settles humorously on "epistolary *ars poetica*."

applied to the work throughout the past two millennia, is "supported by any evidence dating from Horace's lifetime."[46] As a result, insofar as titles are "integral constituents of works of art,"[47] the reader finds him- or herself rather at a loss, for s/he cannot be sure that s/he is meeting the work in accordance with Horace's authorial designs. This is true even if Horace did not title it anything, or entitled it more than one thing, for "an artist can keep track of and enable discourse about a work without actually titling it," using instead "a pet description, derived from some key feature of the work, or . . . a completely neutral numerical or alphabetical catalog"—options that would all imbue the work with a particular and distinct significance, for "the *title slot* for a work of art is never devoid of *aesthetic potential*; *how* it is filled, or that it is *not* filled, is always aesthetically relevant."[48] It should also be noted that the desire to discover "what Horace really called his poem" and thus to force agreement on a single title for it, one ideally with ancient authority, may be a rather modern preoccupation: if the way of referring to a poem showed some variation in the ancient world, and if the titles we use today show a similar variation, it may be because such variation existed, absent of the need evidently felt now for one authoritative title to exclude all others.

In these various ways, and whether by design or accident, the poem ended up becoming (even if not exclusively) the *Ars Poetica*. As the work must, however, be referred to by some (one) name in this study dedicated to it, I retain here the name *Ars Poetica*, first because this is today the most widespread and standard term for the work in the English-speaking classical tradition and beyond. Second, and more importantly, I retain it on the strength of the evidence from Quintilian. Not only are his the earliest attested references to the work, but his *ars poetica / (liber) de arte poetica* are found in a work the aims and interests of which do not include the creation of or a preoccupation with the titles of the works he mentions, and accordingly any titles mentioned are less likely to show meddling by the author. Had it not been too radical, I would have introduced and used here yet another and a previously unattested title for the work: the *Humano capiti*, after the fashion of referring to individual Horatian odes by their opening words,[49] and bearing the notable advantage that it preconditions the reader neither for an *ars* nor for an epistle.

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46. Frischer 1991: 6.

47. Levinson 1985: 29.

48. Ibid.: 33–34, 29; emphasis his.

49. Feeney 1993: 44: "He still is often cited by the *incipit*, despite the introduction of a new numbering system of citation." Similarly, Kenney 1970: 290 notes that "the *Aeneid* was commonly (and very early: Ov. *Tr.* ii 534) referred to as the *Arma virumque*."

The Genre of the Poem

Bound up with its title is the fraught matter of the generic tradition within which the *Ars Poetica* may be located: is it an *ars*, a handbook of didactic intent; or a letter, to be considered alongside Horace's books of epistles? My aim is not to reprise the various arguments for the work as didactic (mini) epic rather than verse epistle, or vice versa, or even to champion it as a tertium quid, though this would be closest to the mark,[50] since such reductive approaches contribute little to our understanding of the work on its own terms.[51] Rather, having elucidated how unavoidably hampered we are by the very title we use simply to acknowledge the reality of the poem's existence,[52] I trace the place of the *Ars Poetica* in various interwoven strands of literary genealogy with a view toward interpreting it as what I suggest it is above all—Horatian hexameter.

Tradition long had it that ancient Greek (and with it Western) literary criticism began with Aristophanes's *Frogs*, the text in which are first found a number of stylistic distinctions and judgments that would prove enduring.[53] While Aristophanes's *Frogs* is, like Horace's *Ars Poetica*, in verse, both are commonly considered alongside Aristotle's *Poetics*, the earliest extant prose work devoted to literary theory, especially drama.[54] Aristotle also touches on literary matters in the *Rhetoric*, while Plato famously considered whether there was a role for poets in the ideal city of his *Republic*. Some decades after Aristotle, Neoptolemus of Parium during the third century BCE wrote poems

50. Readers interested in these matters can find an overview at Frischer 1991: 87–100 (who narrows down the choices to "epistle, didactic poem, or *tertium quid*"), Ferenczi 2014a, and Hardie 2014. Discussion of the *AP*'s genre shows no signs of abating, as may be seen at, e.g., Seeck 1995, Hösle 2009: 68.

51. Cf. Wimsatt 1970: 136 (in Brophy et al. 1970), Horsfall 1979a: 118, 1979b: 171 (on the extent to which the *Epistles* are really letters).

52. Perhaps the most obvious function of titles, after all, is "to provide the reader with a handle by which to make reference to his work" (Wilsmore 1987: 403); cf. Fisher 1984: 289 ("titling permits discourse"), Levinson 1985: 37–38 (titles "denote their bearers and facilitate reference to them").

53. E.g., the grand versus the slender style, and poetry of effort versus poetry of inspiration. On the place of *Frogs* in the ancient Greek literary critical tradition, see O'Sullivan 1992: 15 (who rightly notes the "*a priori* unlikelihood that Aristophanes was solely responsible for his critical terms in an age of great interest in literary matters"), Silk 2000, Rosen 2004 and 2008, Hunter 2009: 29, Ferriss-Hill 2015: 190–91.

54. This is not to suggest that the *Poetics* is an uncomplicated text, or one without an important philosophical component, as the work of Else 1957, Halliwell 1986, Nussbaum 1986a, Janko 1987, and others has shown.

as well as works on literary criticism and philology.[55] Neoptolemus was long thought to be a key figure in the background to Horace's *Ars Poetica*, since Porphyrio states that Horace "gathered the teachings of Neoptolemus of Parium—not all of them, but the most outstanding ones" ("congessit praecepta Neoptolemi τοῦ Παριάνου non omnia sed eminentissima").[56] The fact that we have only Neoptolemus as filtered through Philodemus's *On Poems*, however, rather complicates our ability to evaluate properly Porphyrio's claim.[57]

If we are to read the *Ars Poetica* as being in the tradition of didactic poetry, on the other hand, rather than of literary critical treatises (though, as is clear, the two overlap), it must be considered alongside the near-contemporary works by Lucretius (*De Rerum Natura*) and Virgil (*Georgics*), themselves in a tradition extending back to Hesiod.[58] While most would be uncomfortable classing these as mock-didactic (though jokes about attempting to farm with the *Georgics* are well known to classicists), they are equally far from straightforwardly and plainly didactic.[59] Alongside these runs the genre of epic parody, which had begun already in the seventh or sixth century BCE with the pseudo-Homeric *Margites*[60] and is widespread in the fifth-century plays of Old Comedy as well.[61] From the fourth century BCE are known several works that combine mock didactic and mock epic, Archestratus of Gela's *Hedypatheia* being the best preserved:[62] the poet begins in epic vein by invoking his muse (there is no

55. *OCD s.v.* "Neoptolemus (2)."

56. Hauthal 1866: 649.

57. See especially Tate 1928, Brink 1963: 43–78 with Williams 1964, Laird 2007: 133–34, and Reinhardt 2013, as well as my chapter 4, for how the understanding of Horace's "debt" to Neoptolemus has shifted over the past century.

58. Campbell 1924: 40 describes the *AP*, too, as "on one side at least in direct descent from the *Works and Days*," and Williams 1968: 357, 1980: 266–82 discusses some correspondences between the *AP* and *Georgics*. The connection between Virgil's *Georgics* and Hesiod is also frequently made, e.g., Thomas 1986, 1988: 3–6. Volk 2002: 44–68 is useful on the development of the didactic mode up to and through the Roman period, and Ferenczi 2014b, Hajdu 2014, and Hardie 2014 consider the didactic features of the *AP*.

59. On the didacticism of the *Georgics*, see further Thomas 1988: 3, who notes that while "Virgil himself invites the characterization," nevertheless "a poem which is to be truly didactic in content as well as form . . . implies the existence of an audience which is to be instructed, and in spite of the long-held view that the function of the *Georgics* was to restore an interest in Italian agriculture, the fact is that no Roman farmer would have read the poem for practical instruction."

60. See *Poet.* 1448b38–9a2 with Olson and Sens 1999: 5–6.

61. Olson and Sens 1999: 7.

62. Henriksson 1956, Gowers 1993: 135 with n101 ("gastronomic parodies of epic"), Olson and Sens 1999 (an edition of the fragments of Matro of Pitane) and 2000 (esp. xxviii–xliii).

personal addressee as in the *Georgics*, *De Rerum Natura*, and *Ars Poetica*)[63] and the didactic impulse finds its outlet in the prominent focus on gastronomy. In Latin and slightly later in date, there may be found Ennius's *Hedyphagetica*[64] and Varro's *Peri Edesmaton*, both epic poems on food in the tradition of Archestratus. Notably, like Horace, both Ennius and Varro also wrote satire, pointing at a perhaps natural connection between satire and didaxis, facilitated also by the fact that most Roman satire was, like epic and didactic poetry, written in hexameters, as are also Horace's own *Epistles*.[65] It is easily apparent that didactic is itself a multivalent designation, encompassing works that might also be described as epic, as satirical or humorous or parodic,[66] as bucolic, as philosophical, and more. The same is true of literary epistle, particularly in the hands of Horace: the *Epistles* are literary critical, didactic, satirical, and also tantalizingly personal (as are his *Satires*).

The matter of the *Ars Poetica*'s genre thus quickly becomes murky and too dense to navigate successfully. If Horace had in mind Virgil's *Georgics* as he wrote, Hesiod necessarily made his way into the poem, as did Lucretius and Callimachus,[67] though Horace's connection with these Virgilian models is direct as well. If Horace was looking to the Greco-Roman literary critical tradition, Neoptolemus of Parium brought Aristotle, who brought Aristophanes's *Frogs* (familiar to Horace in its own right, too), and Philodemus also brought Plato (again, present without filtering). If Horace was at times thinking of his own *Satires*, as it is clear he was (and had the *Ars Poetica* come down to us under the title of *Sermo* or *Satura*, it would declare its manifest connections to these books in incontrovertible terms), then Greek and Roman comedy and Greek

63. On the importance of epic's invocation of the Muse and the related "self-consciousness" of didactic and epic, see Volk 2002: 6–24, 42.

64. While Courtney 1993: 24–25 is skeptical that Ennius's (or Archestratus's) poem is mock-didactic, he regards Varro's "gastronomic catalogues," along with those in Hor. *Sat.* 2.4, as "plainly satirical in intent."

65. Ennius's *Hedyphagetica* is in hexameters, as are Lucretius's *DRN*, Virgil's *Georgics*, and Hesiod's *Works and Days*.

66. As Hardie 2014: 44 notes, for example, "didactic is an important part of the mix of Horatian *sermo* from its inception." See Olson and Sens 1999: 5 on the distinction between satire and parody as it pertains to the works of Archestratus, Matro, etc.

67. Lucretius's "linguistic influence upon the *Georgics* is pervasive" (Thomas 1988: 4–11), while the presence of Callimachus may be seen already in such fundamental aspects of the poem as its four-book structure (modeled on the four books of the *Aetia*) as well as its "learning and interest in recondite matters of scholarly concern." As Feeney 1993: 44 notes, moreover, "the very act of composing in books is a feature of Hellenistic culture, for pre-Hellenistic poets composed poems, not books": like the *Georgics*, then, Horace's *Satires*, *Odes*, *Epistles*, and even *Ars Poetica* (*liber de arte poetica*) are Callimachean in form.

philosophy and Lucilius intrude from there, as do Varro and Ennius (despite Horace's excision of them from his satirical canon),[68] who bring also their mock-didactic writings. Lucretius arrives accompanied by the full material of the *De Rerum Natura* that contains also Epicurus and with him Philodemus (in whom resides Neoptolemus, and so on).[69] The territory of the *Ars Poetica* has become crowded, each generic strand that informs it jostling for preeminence of place.

If Roman satire is an "anti-genre," as Kirk Freudenburg has described it,[70] then the *Ars Poetica*, which defies each and every generic classification,[71] is anti-genre on the scale of an individual poem. Richard Thomas describes Virgil's *Georgics* as having "no single formal or generic model—that is, no author and no work could lay claims, even on the surface, to Virgil's allegiance."[72] Horace's *Ars Poetica* is best understood in these same terms. While Horace may well have started with Philodemus and Neoptolemus, Aristophanes and Aristotle in mind, and looked aside toward Lucretius and Virgil, his poem as a final product is sufficiently far from any one model that it stands generically alone—the first, as Hösle 2009 terms them, of the "poetische Poetiken,"[73] a form that would be taken up by Geoffrey of Vinsauf, Boileau, and Pope. Furthermore, whatever its precise date, Horace was writing the *Ars Poetica* around the time that Virgil wrote his *Georgics*, Ovid his *Ars Amatoria*, and Varro his *Peri Edesmaton*. The intellectual milieu, then, was fertile for extending the form and conventions of didactic to plausible but ultimately perverse subject matter, giving rise to a set of works that might be termed paradidactic (to avoid the pejorative connotations of mock-didactic).

Seen in this light, Horace's ploy becomes especially clever, for poetry is the least problematic of all these topics: while "Ovid does not, of course, seriously offer the *Ars* [*Amatoria*] as an actual manual of seduction, any more than Virgil really aims to teach farming in the *Georgics*,"[74] poetry and writing are such natural topics for a work of didactic that the ways in which the *Ars Poetica*

68. Horace acknowledges Ennius only as an epic poet and dramatist; see Ferriss-Hill 2015: 10 with nn36–38.

69. See Janko 2000: 9–10 on Philodemus and Lucretius's *DRN*.

70. Freudenburg 2001: 1.

71. Reinhardt 2013 is useful on the ways in which the *AP* confounds the reader's expectations of it as didactic poetry; as he notes, for example, the "absence of conventional didactic structuring devices is a pervasive feature in *AP*" (517).

72. Thomas 1986: 173–74; cf. Reinhardt's 2013: 505 comment that while some scholars, with the poem's content in mind, can say that "there is no original thought in *AP*," others, looking to the poem's form, can say, "This is Horace's most imaginative, adventurous work."

73. Cf. Seeck 1995: 143 ("wie kann man in dichterischer Form über Dichtung reden?"), Russell 2006: 324 ("a poem on poetics").

74. Miller 1993: 232; cf. Hardie 2014: 43 and my introduction, n59.

(deliberately) fails as and yet goes far beyond straightforward didactic has often eluded readers. *Praeceptor amoris* is a plainly amusing fiction; *praeceptor artis poeticae*, by contrast, beguiles the *Pisones* and us into believing, or at least wishing, that by following the dictates enumerated in Horace's poem we, too, may become expert in literary composition. By redirecting the evident contemporary taste for paradidactic back to a plausibly real topic in a further broadening of this already slippery tradition, Horace succeeded in obscuring and obfuscating the genre of his work, and with this its tone and aims.

Above all, however, we should not lose sight of the fact that the *Ars Poetica* is in hexameters—the same hexameters of the *Epistles* and *Satires*.[75] Just as Horace's *Satires*, though viewed as second in a genre with four representatives (Lucilius, Horace, Persius, Juvenal), were in fact the first exclusively hexameter collection of *saturae/sermones*,[76] and with his first book of *Epistles* Horace had invented an entirely new genre,[77] so we may be best off understanding the *Ars Poetica* as another, unique, Horatian starting point, rather than attempting to locate it securely (without success) within any existing tradition. Porphyrio already distinguished the *Satires* and *Epistles*, yet revealed their fundamental unity, by describing the former as "a conversation with someone who is present" and the latter as an interaction with someone who is far away, adding that he saw them as differing in title alone.[78] As conversation (*sermo*), the *Ars Poetica* encompasses both possibilities. Moreover, I suspect that a reader, absent a familiarity with a particular line or passage, would be hard pressed to assign it correctly to the *Satires*, *Epistles*, or *Ars Poetica*.

The Date of the Poem

As uncertain and controversial as its name and generic affiliations has been the *Ars Poetica*'s date. While the poem reads well as the culmination of a successful career, in which the wizened poet dispenses advice to tyros in the art, it goes without saying that this impression does not constitute evidence for the

75. On the meter of the *AP*, see Ott 1970 with Greenberg 1970, Möhler 1989.

76. The *Saturae* of Ennius and Lucilius are in a variety of meters (including, but not limited to, the hexameter).

77. Kilpatrick 1986: xiii, Mayer 1994: 1–5, and Reinhardt 2013: 501 do well to remind us of this: although earlier authors had written letters in verse (e.g., Lucilius in his fifth book, Catullus in poems 13 and 35), Horace was the first to compose a coherent book of poems in this form.

78. *Ad* Hor. *Sat*. 1.1: "in Sermonum autem libris vult intellegi, quasi apud praesentem se loqui, Epistulas vero quasi ad absentes missas"; *ad Epist*. 1.1.1: "Flacci Epistularum libri titulo tantum dissimiles a (libris) Sermonum sunt, nam et metri et verborum communis adsumptio eadem est."

veracity of such a state of affairs.[79] This reading is made all the more enticing by the placement of the poem, fairly standard since Stephanus's 1549 edition, as last among Horace's works,[80] as though the jewel in the poet's crown, offering a retrospective upon all his earlier writings and finalizing the "architectonic completeness"[81] of his vita. Unfortunately, however, there is very little to go on in any attempt to date the *Ars Poetica*.

The scraps of supposed evidence include the following: first, mention is made in the *Ars Poetica* of several perhaps contemporary figures, most notably the *Pisones*, but including also Aulus Cascellius (371), Maecius (387), Messalla (371), Quintilius (438), Varius (55), and Virgil (55). Second, there is Horace's odd description of himself, apparently at the moment of writing, as *nil scribens ipse* ("writing nothing myself," 306), also problematized by the fact that it is internal to the poem. Third, Suetonius's *Vita Horatii* reports that Augustus was apparently put out at not being a dialogic partner in any of Horace's writings so far (*post sermones vero quosdam lectos nullam sui mentionem habitam ita sit questus—irasci me tibi scito quod non in plerisque eiusmodi scriptis mecum potissimum loquaris*). And fourth, Porphyrio ventures an (early but not contemporary) identification of the *Pisones*. These have given rise to the following interpretations, arguments, and counterarguments. First, that the poem was written between 24 and 20 BCE, given the roles of Maecius (Tarpa), whom Nettleship supposes to be distinguished but not yet elderly, and of Quintilius (Varus), whom he supposes to be dead;[82] that it belongs to 28–27 if Quintilius's death is placed in 28 rather than 24 and if the dates of Aulus Cascellius (born 110/104) and Messalla (Corvinus) are taken into account (at the "height of his power" in 27);[83] and that it must be prior to 19 BCE, the date of Virgil's death.[84] Second, that *nil scribens ipse* means "not [currently] writing lyric," in which case the *Ars Poetica* belongs either to the *intervallum lyricum* between the first three

79. Oliensis 1998: 5 similarly regards the *AP* as a "late masterwork of deferential authority" in terms of Horace's persona, while clarifying that it "may not be Horace's last work chronologically but is certainly the work of an established author" (16).

80. Brink 1963: 239. Frischer 1991: 6–16 suggests that Lambinus's 1561 edition, which followed Stephanus's in the placement of the *AP* as last, was responsible for cementing Stephanus's apparently innovative arrangement (cf. Wilkins 1896: 330).

81. Reckford 1969: 11.

82. Nettleship 1883: 44.

83. Elmore 1935.

84. See especially Smith 1936, who finds a way around the majority opinion that Virgil (and Varius) must be alive at the time of the *AP*'s composition by suggesting that the poem was composed in two phases (23–22 and 13–8); he also disputes Elmore's dating particularly in regard to Aulus Cascellius's age. See also further Dilke 1958: 52–53 and Frischer 1991: 19–20.

books of *Odes* (published around 23 BCE) and the fourth (perhaps 13 BCE),[85] or to the period after the publication of *Odes* 4.[86] Third, that Suetonius's term *sermones* refers to the *Ars Poetica* and *Epistles* 2.2, such that *Epistles* 2.1 (to Augustus, at last, in fulfilment of his wishes) postdates both of these.[87] And fourth, that Porphyrio is right in asserting the *Pisones* to be Lucius Calpurnius Piso and his sons, in which case the poem dates to probably 15 BCE (the year of this Piso's consulship) or later; or that Porphyrio is wrong, in which case, if a certain Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso is meant instead, the poem dates to the twenties BCE.[88] On the basis of these conflicting and altogether unauthoritative pieces of evidence, which admit of various interpretations, "almost every date from 28 B.C. to the poet's death in 8 B.C. has been suggested."[89] To put this in its Horatian context, the *Ars Poetica* has been placed between *Satires* 2 and *Odes* 1–3 (28–27 BCE); between *Odes* 1–3 and *Epistles* 1 (23–20); between *Epistles* 1 and *Epistles* 2.2 (20–19); between *Epistles* 2.2 and the *Carmen Saeculare* (18); after the *Carmen Saeculare* and before *Odes* 4 (17–16); before *Epistles* 2.1 (15); and after *Odes* 4 (13–8).[90] Many of these efforts at dating are further vitiated by their circularity: the arguments for an early date for the poem are bound up with those for the Gnaei Pisones as addressees, while those for a later date are bound up with the arguments for the Lucii Pisones.[91]

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85. E.g., Brink 1963: 183, 204, n4, 239–43; dates as at Harrison 2007a: 347–48.

86. Orelli 1844: 769, on the other hand, reads the phrase to exclude the dramatic genres and epic but include satire and lyric, while Kiessling and Heinze 1914: 342 and many others since have taken it as ironically self-deprecating ("ironisch: 'da ich nichts, das der Rede wert wäre, zu schreiben vermag'"). Other suggestions as to the meaning of *nil scribens ipse* are ventured throughout the present study, and increasingly, as at Sedley 2014: 115, the feeling is that "it is not so easy to agree . . . that *nil scribens ipse* would be a natural way for Horace to describe himself as writing one thing rather than another."

87. To Fraenkel's 1957: 383 "it is obvious that in this context *sermones quosdam* cannot refer to the epistles of the first book but only to the letters *ad Pisones* [sc. the *Ars Poetica*] and *ad Florum* [sc. *Epist.* 2.2]," Dilke 1958: 49–50 objects, "To some of us it is by no means obvious." Dilke adds that since we have only Suetonius's paraphrase of Augustus's putative request, we cannot be sure that *sermones* was the emperor's original lexical choice nor that his complaint to Horace was exactly as Suetonius relays it, and he rightly concludes, "Thus the *Vita Horati* tells us nothing about the date of the *Ars Poetica*."

88. The identity of the *Pisones* is discussed in chapter 2.

89. Dilke 1958: 49 provides a thorough overview of these previous attempts, and the matter has since been revisited by, e.g., Duckworth 1965, Newman 1967: 75–81, d'Anna 1983, Frischer 1991, Brink 1963: 239–43.

90. See Frischer 1991: 17–18.

91. So, too, Syme 1980: 339. The same objection may be raised against Frischer's novel 1991 hypothesis that the *Pisones* are yet a third group, namely, the preceding generation of Lucii Pisones.

There are, however, three additional pieces of evidence, external to the poem and not consisting of claims by later writers, that align to indicate a late date for the work, further supporting the recent consensus that the poem was published in or around 15 BCE and that it was Horace's last work before his death in 8 BCE.[92] The first of these involves metrical analysis, and this has taken several forms. The investigation of Duckworth 1965 found that the four patterns of dactylic and spondaic feet that occur most frequently in Horace's hexameters "show a more or less steady decrease in frequency, with the *Ars Poetica* marking the end of the progression in each instance, an apparent indication of lateness of date" (86), such that the *Ars Poetica* comes after *Satires* 1, *Satires* 2, *Epistles* 1, *Epistles* 2.2, and *Epistles* 2.1 (in that order).[93] The eight most frequent patterns display the same progression and yield the same results (87). Analysis of the relative proportions of dactyls (lower earlier on, higher later) and spondees (higher earlier on, lower later) in the first four feet of the lines points to the same conclusion: the *Ars Poetica* was Horace's final and culminating work in hexameters, and, moreover, closest in date and style to *Epistles* 2.1, the Letter to Augustus (87–88).[94] The variety of metrical patterns in units of sixteen lines also

92. E.g., Russell 2006: 325 ("much to be said for a late" date), Harrison 2007a: 347–48 (after 12 BCE), Laird 2007: 133 ("around 10 BCE"), Nisbet 2007: 20 (noting that there has been "much controversy" on the measure prefers a late date with Lucius Piso as dedicatee: "When the consul of 15 BCE returned to Rome after crushing a major rebellion . . . a literary epistle would be an unpolitical tribute to his broad culture"), Leitch 2010: 120 ("perhaps as late as 10 B.C.E., although the date remains controversial"), Günther 2013: 48 (the *AP*'s date "cannot be determined with certainty, but it is probably Horace's last work"), Hardie 2014: 43 ("I shall assume, without arguing for it, a late date for the *Ars*").

93. Of the six feet in a line of Latin hexameter verse, the sixth and final foot contains only two syllables, of which the second may be either long or short, and the fifth foot almost invariably scans as a dactyl. The first four feet, where metrical variability therefore exists, may each be dactylic (d) or spondaic (s). The four patterns of dactyls and spondees that are found most frequently in Horace's *Satires* and *Epistles* (and somewhat less frequently in the *AP*) are identified by Duckworth 1965: 75 as dsss, sdss, dsds, and ddss.

94. Duckworth 1965 presents eleven categories of metrical pattern in all, most of which support the theory that the *AP* must have been written later than *Epistles* 1 and 2; Duckworth is even prompted by some of the aberrant evidence to wonder, "Is it possible that the strange discrepancy here between the *Ars Poetica* and the other hexameter works indicates that the poem was written so near Horace's death that it was not completely revised?" (89). While Frischer 1991: 20–25 criticizes the results of Duckworth's tests, employing a statistical approach that may seem foreboding, two further problems should be noted (Frischer's own methodology for dating the *AP* has already been critiqued by Keyser 1992, though defended by Clayman, Crane, and Guthrie 1993). First, Frischer's criticism of Duckworth's first two tests relies on a table in Duckworth containing mathematical errors that neither Duckworth nor Frischer noticed (in the table on

shows the same. Duckworth's metrical analysis was, however, not the first: Nettleship had already considered the matter, as had Michaelis, yet both discounted their findings because these failed to support their starting premise that the *Ars Poetica* was written in or shortly before 20 BCE and, accordingly, before *Epistles* 1.[95] Second, Newman 1967 sees the key Augustan term *vates* ("poet-priest," as opposed to *poeta*, more plainly meaning "poet") used in the *Ars Poetica* in a manner that suggests a fully worked-out understanding of the term, as described especially at 391–407.[96] And third, d'Anna 1983 argues for a date after 13 BCE from correspondences with the *Carmen Saeculare* (performed in 17 BCE), as well as from the position of the *Ars Poetica* in the manuscript tradition.[97] That these three disparate forms of evidence—none of which takes

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p. 86, 16 of the 24 percentages given have been shifted into the incorrect rows, i.e., the correct data have been arranged, for reasons irrecoverable, in descending order in each column, rendering them mostly worthless; on p. 87, the percentages given for the "second four" are simply incorrect, as are the resulting totals, provided that the raw data on p. 92 is correct). The second problem lies in Frischer's assertion that "Duckworth has failed to find a significant correlation between the poems and the distribution of metrical patterns" (23), based upon Frischer's chi-square test of independence performed on each of Duckworth's sixteen patterns across all the hexameter collections and yielding the unsatisfactory p-value of 0.270. If Duckworth's data is considered in groups of four, however, as Duckworth himself does (group 1 being the four most frequently occurring patterns, etc.; see my introduction, n93), the resulting p-value of a chi-square test is a respectable 0.0369, lending support to Duckworth's original findings that Horatian hexameters exhibit significant differences in metrical patterning over time (with the *AP* generally as the culmination of the trends). Frischer also overemphasizes the degree to which Duckworth sees or needs to see Horace's metrical patterning as deliberate (while Duckworth does speak of, e.g., Horace's "desire for greater metrical variety," 78, the data he provides consist of metrical patterns that largely could not result from deliberate design on the poet's part).

95. Nettleship 1885: 171–72, Michaelis 1877: 428–29 (cf. Duckworth 1965: 85: "his figures actually favor placing the *Ars Poetica* after the other two *Epistles* of Book II, but, since he dates the composition of the *Ars* in 20 B.C. . . . he disregards his own results").

96. This insight aside, Newman 1967: 75–81, 127–30 dates the poem to the late 20s BCE on the grounds that the understanding of *vates* demonstrated in the poem indicates that the *AP* "must come in the 'vatic' period of Horace's life," i.e., close to *Odes* 1–3 and *Epistles* 2.1. Newman (79) considers a late date but rejects it for not altogether convincing reasons: lines 391–407 do in fact show that the *vates* concept has not been "demoted," and it is entirely plausible that Horace, at a later point in life, retrospectively "veered round to restate earlier doctrines" (something Newman says would have been done "suddenly, for no apparent reason").

97. The *AP*'s position in the manuscript tradition and in the ancient scholia has been widely deployed in arguments for its dating, though this approach is naturally problematic. The Ξ tradition (manuscripts ABCK) places the *AP* immediately after the *Carmen Saeculare* (and after the *Odes* and *Epodes*, and before the *Satires* and/or *Epistles* / *Epistles* and/or *Satires*), while the Ψ group (comprised of Rδπλφψ) puts it in second position overall, after the *Odes*, and before the

into account the vexed identity of the *Pisones*, not to mention the status as living or deceased of the other figures named—all coincide to point toward a late date for the *Ars Poetica*, one that places it last in Horace's life and writing career, is probably as solid an argument as can be made. I therefore feel secure in treating the *Ars Poetica* here as Horace's final poem and as therefore possessing by rights the retrospective qualities it so plainly evinces.

Whatever its date, however, the arguments I present here for the *Ars Poetica* as a response or mirroring counterpart to the *Satires* (especially *Satires* 1, as the second book would not be published until 30) would still hold true, but that response would be more immediate rather than issued from across the gulf of a lifetime of writing. The *Ars Poetica* also has a great deal of imagery and thought in common with the *Odes*, and again, whether this is the result of temporal proximity or a long-held worldview expressing itself decades apart is of little relevance to my arguments. By way of a final thought on the matter, I would maintain that not only is the poem's date not of the greatest relevance; rather, much like the poem's vexed title or the sought-after identity of the *Pisones*, it is the wrong question. Practicing poets may work on a piece over the course of several decades, such that the work is, in a fundamental and essential way, undatable—as well as unnamable. We may well wonder whether the same is true of the *Ars Poetica*, especially given Horace's advice not to rush to publication (*AP* 388–89).

The Standing of the Poem—A Story

The standard view remains that the *Ars Poetica* was long regarded as straightforwardly didactic and as possessing sincerely intended pedagogical value and application.[98] While Horace's *Satires* and *Odes* were read for their Latinity, their grammatical and literary value,[99] the *Ars Poetica* was, we are repeatedly informed,

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Epodes, *Carmen Saeculare*, and *Epistles/Satires*. While either placement would appear to lend weight to the hypothesis that the poem was written in the vicinity of the composition of the *Odes* (whether after *Odes* 1–3 and before 4, or after *Odes* 4), it should be noted that neither of the two classes of manuscripts places the *Satires* and *Epodes*, known to be Horace's earliest works, first. See further Vollmer 1907: 290, Reynolds 1983: 184, Frischer 1991: 6–7, Nisbet 2007: 20.

98. Cf. Friis-Jensen 1995b: 360 ("anyone who desired to learn the rules of poetry-writing would turn to Horace's *Art of Poetry*, guided by a teacher or an up-to-date commentary"), 2007: 300 ("medieval interpreters of Horace's *Ars Poetica* all shared the view that the poem is entirely didactic").

99. On the comparatively large number of early medieval manuscripts containing Horace alongside Juvenal and Persius (common in collected volumes from the eleventh through fifteenth centuries), attesting to the evident popularity of satire, see Reynolds 1996: 13–14, Copeland 2016a, 2016b, 2016c. Horace's *Satires* and *Epistles* are metrically and linguistically more straightforward than his lyrics (cf. Tarrant at Reynolds 1983: 182), and their moralizing content also lends itself well to an educational context.

treated solely as what its conventional title communicates: an *ars*, read alongside Cicero[100] as a set of rules for "rhetorical theory and compositional teaching."[101] Continually present in early medieval schools, it was supposedly valued "not for its statements about art in any elevated sense, but for its advice on such basic issues as how to choose one's material, how to achieve stylistic consistency, and how to maintain narrative continuity."[102]

Yet this story, that the *Ars Poetica* was treasured during late antiquity, the Middle Ages, and even into the early modern period for its rules and instructions, used by monkish teachers and their earnest students as a handbook while they crafted their own compositions in verse and prose, is undermined by abundant evidence that few (if any) readers have ever found the poem easy to understand. Even as its practical value is stated and restated, there may be found occasional qualifying notes that the work required and requires "introductory texts and glosses" to render it intelligible and that Horace's teachings are and have always been "elusive," though such passing observations do not then proceed to influence the claims made about the poem and its history.[103] What is often framed as a later realization that the rules Horace lays out are not terribly clear and his instructions not easily applicable in any direct fashion (they amount often to "just do it" or "try harder") was, however, as the robust and lengthy commentary tradition attests, in fact always apparent to his educated readership. While later readers might congratulate themselves on casting aside this "handbook" of benighted inhabitants of centuries past, the straightforward application of the *Ars Poetica* to the mechanics of teaching writing by previous generations has been vastly overstated, ignoring as it does the fact that the poem was always hard in its Latin, always inscrutable in its meanings. The notion that Horace's late antique and medieval readers were only interested in the poem's stated contents, however, allowed their interest in the poem to be dismissed as self-evidently silly, whereas the true fault may lie in the fact that it later ceased

100. The pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and several of Cicero's oratorical works (especially *De inventione*) were central to the instructional curriculum alongside the *AP*; Friis-Jensen 1990, 1995b.

101. Copeland 2016c: 59.

102. Copeland 2016c: 60; see also Bolgar 1954: 115–16, Copeland and Sluiter 2009: 546–48.

103. Quotations from Friis-Jensen 1995b: 362 and Copeland and Sluiter 2009: 548, respectively. Hints at the difficulty identified here may be found in some of the secondary literature: Friis-Jensen 2008: 239–40, for example, says that "its readers actually considered it to be a didactic treatise on the art of writing poetry. But they also soon realised that they needed professional help to be able to extract its precepts," and he notes, 1995b: 392–93, that the work was "insufficiently explicit in terms of prescriptive doctrine," speaking of "Horace's sophisticated, witty but very demanding advice" and his "bewildering universe."

to be read holistically. The understanding that the *Ars Poetica* was valued for its didactic content rests upon a misconception of where this didactic content was thought to lie: although widely supposed to have resided in its precepts, the works analyzed in the epilogue indicate that the value was actually seen as residing in its form and, above all, in its marriage of form and precept.

The distinction between presentation (or external qualities) and content (or internal qualities) was one commonly made since antiquity and throughout the Middle Ages: "Writing *about the art* is to teach precepts about it" ("*de arte* scribit qui de ipsa precepta tradit"), an anonymous twelfth-century prologue to the *Ars Poetica* explains, but "working *from the art* is to follow the teacher's precepts" ("*ex arte* tractat qui eius precepta imitatur").[104] Friis-Jensen 1995b: 360 accordingly speaks of the "double message" that medieval students of the *Ars Poetica* would work to glean: "A close scrutiny of the literary perfection of a classical masterpiece was in itself rewarding, and in this case the classical poem was also a didactic text which, properly understood, would teach the rules of the art." It is curious that so many readers of the *Ars Poetica* after the twelfth century and into the twenty-first have maligned the poem as a failed manual on account of their own preference for reading it *de arte* rather than *ex arte*, as so many of their predecessors were able to do. At the same time that it has been harmed by this, however, the *Ars Poetica* has also benefited from the misconception of its uses and purposes, for without the widespread sense that this poem was somehow separate from the rest of the canon of classical antiquity,[105] it would likely not have come to possess its unusual standing, alongside Aristotle's *Poetics*, as a "different" sort of work,[106] one with (as everyone supposedly agreed) a concrete applicability.

The afterlife of the poem in late antiquity and the Dark Ages[107] is difficult to reconstruct. It is clear that Horace in general became a school text very early,

104. See further Friis-Jensen 1988: 137. Copeland and Sluiter 2009: 409 note that this idea appears also in Thierry of Chartres's twelfth-century commentary to Cic. *Inv. rhet.* 1.8; see with Fredborg 1988: 76.

105. As indeed it is, being "the only poetic text transmitted to us from antiquity that has the theory of literature as its exclusive subject," Ferenczi 2014a: 11.

106. Geue 2014: 144 also marvels at this treatment of the *AP*: "Any other poem written in the thick of the 'Augustan Age' would have accreted a thousand political readings round its core by now."

107. Roughly 500–1000, or 487–800, if defined as the period when there was no Holy Roman Emperor in the West. Whatever we wish to term this period, "nearly all classical Latin authors went through a period of hibernation between the mid-sixth century, when the copying of classical texts slowed to a halt, and their rediscovery at some point during the Middle Ages" (Tarrant 2007: 285). On the decline of Classical literature until its revival beginning in the eighth century,

within a generation or two of his death, as Juvenal 7.225–27 attests,[108] and that his poems continued to form a significant component of the educational curriculum during the Middle Ages.[109] His importance is shown by such evidence as the testimony of Aimeric, who in his *Ars lectoria* of 1086 lists him among the "gold" writers, alongside Terence, Virgil, Ovid, Sallust, Lucan, Statius, Juvenal, and Persius, or by Conrad's *Dialogus*, where he is likewise placed in the category of *maiores*.[110] The place of the *Ars Poetica* specifically, however, can be hard to discern, since most references name only Horace, rather than enumerating his individual works. Likewise, the existence in various locations around Europe of manuscripts containing the *Ars Poetica* indicates only that this poem was valued to more or less the same degree as the other works included in a given collection. The thirteen earliest extant manuscripts of Horace and those regarded as "indispensable"[111] contain various arrangements of works from the Horatian corpus. Manuscripts A (ninth or tenth century) and V (date uncertain, now destroyed) do not include the *Ars Poetica* at all. K (eleventh century), contains the *Ars Poetica* but not all of the other works. Other manuscripts contain only portions of the *Ars Poetica*, such as B (ninth century), which gives lines 1–440. The majority, however, contain the complete works of Horace: R (ninth century, and perhaps the oldest manuscript), l (ninth century), δ (late ninth century), λ (ninth/tenth century), a (ninth/tenth century), π (ninth/tenth century; with some pages lost from what was likely an otherwise complete collection of Horace's works), φ (tenth century), ψ (tenth century), and C/E (eleventh century; again, some pages missing to account for the gap from *Odes* 4.7.21 to *Epodes* 1.23).[112] Two additional early manuscripts known to have been produced in the British Isles before 1100, during the *aetas Horatiana*,[113]

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see further Reynolds 1983: xiv–xxvi, and on the Horatian manuscript tradition, 182–86 (contribution by Tarrant).

108. While Horace was a standard school author in late antiquity (see Tarrant 2007, Stadeler 2014: 51–53), nothing can be said for certain about the extent of the readership in that period for the *AP* specifically.

109. "Much read in medieval classrooms," Copeland 2016a: 9; see also Vollmann 1996, Copeland 2016b: 23–28 (on the *Liber catonianus* as fundamental to elementary teaching).

110. Huygens 1970: 111–14; see Bolgar 1954: 423, Copeland 2016b: 24–25.

111. Reynolds 1983: 183.

112. The number of manuscripts containing at least one poem by Horace has been placed by Villa 1992, 1993, 1994 at 815 (cf. Friis-Jensen 1995a: 229–30), and her exhaustive catalog shows much the same patterns persisting into later centuries as those discernible in these earliest thirteen manuscripts.

113. As the tenth and eleventh centuries have been dubbed for their preponderance of Horace manuscripts; the *aetas Virgiliana* occupies the eighth and ninth, the *aetas Ovidiana* the twelfth and thirteenth (Friis-Jensen 2007: 293, Ziolkowski 2016: 172).

are also extant: one contains all of Horace's works except the *Epistles*; the other, all the works.[114] What, if anything, may be concluded from this smattering of evidence is that the *Ars Poetica* was through the eleventh century considered important but perhaps not the most important work by Horace—that honor would go to the *Odes*, which are omnipresent in the manuscript tradition except where very small portions have evidently fallen out.[115]

Although many of the mechanisms by which its ascendance happened are now irrecoverable,[116] by the twelfth century the *Ars Poetica* had succeeded in attaining its standing as the established and paradigmatic *Ars Poetica*: a central text used for teaching at all levels and appreciated as a seminal yet somehow different work from classical antiquity, and one that also inspired imitations, as demonstrated by the numerous extant *artes poetriae* discussed in the epilogue. The popularity of the *Ars Poetica* in this period may owe something to the fact that it was a unique document, Aristotle's *Poetics* being still relatively unknown.[117] Although evidence is somewhat scanty for the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in comparison to the preceding and subsequent ones, the *Ars Poetica* was clearly known and being read: Dante alludes to it twice in the *Divine Comedy*,[118] and Petrarch owned a copy of the poem and refers to Horace's *Epistles* throughout his own Horatian metrical epistles as well as in his *Letter to*

114. Gneuss and Lapidge 2014: 157 (entry 179.5), 516 (entry 681.5); cf. also 199 (entry 252). These and more are noted by Copeland 2016b.

115. Much has been written on the readership of Horace's *Odes*; see, e.g., Friis-Jensen 1988, 1993: 258, Griffin 1996, Most 1996, Harrison 2007d, Money 2007, Talbot 2009, Sowerby 2012, Moul 2015: 540.

116. Cf. Friis-Jensen 1995b: 360. Russell 2006: 340 summarizes that "from the early Middle Ages, Horace was a curriculum author, and no part of him was more studied than the *Ars*."

117. It was long assumed that Horace and other Romans of his period did not have direct access to the texts of Aristotle (as recently as Reinhardt 2013: 505), but Tarán and Gutas 2012 make the following important points: "Aristotle's works were available during the Hellenistic age" (28); "beginning in the second half of the first century BCE there was a revival of interest in Aristotle's scholarly works" (though "we have no evidence of any particular interest in the *Poetics*," 31); the archetype of the *Poetics* dates to somewhere in the period from the second century CE to the end of the sixth or first half of the seventh (32–37). This evidence shows that it should not be considered impossible for Horace to have known Aristotle's *Poetics* directly, although in the Middle Ages it would be known primarily in the 1278 Latin translation of William of Moerbeke (Friis-Jensen 1995b: 362, Tarán and Gutas 2012: 36, 39–40).

118. *AP* 394 at *Inferno* 32.10–11 and *AP* 60–62 at *Paradiso* 26.137–38; Dante also cites the *AP* in his *Epístola a Can Grande della Scala* (cf. Frischer 1996: 72, Mañas Nuñez 2012: 226), itself an epistle, though otherwise for Dante he is "Orazio satirico" (Griffin 1996: 182; cf. Mañas Nuñez 2012: 228–29)— yet "Orazio satirico" should not be thought incompatible with the Horace of the *AP*.

Horace.[119] Despite its evident continuing popularity,[120] the *Ars Poetica* remained dense and confusing enough—yet also important and worthwhile enough—to its many interested readers that, extending the tradition of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries,[121] thoroughly annotated editions began to be produced and published in print in the fifteenth century—almost as soon as the printing press was introduced—with the *editio princeps* appearing in or around 1470.[122] In the period 1400–1700, numerous commentaries of fundamental importance were written, at first in neo-Latin, on the *Ars Poetica* as on Horace's other works and on classical and Biblical literature more generally.[123] A key work, in that it was the "first modern humanist commentary" to be printed on Horace, was by Cristoforo Landino, published in 1482.[124] The edition, which contained the full text of Horace with Landino's notes, was both an "instant success" and "as far as we know today . . . the only humanist commentary accessible in a printed edition until Badius published his commentary in Paris in 1500, that is, eighteen years after Landino was printed for the first time."[125] Landino's commentary continued to be reprinted into the sixteenth century, often

119. See Friis-Jensen 1997b, and further McGann 2007: 307–10 on Horace and Petrarch.

120. Friis-Jensen 1995a: 229–30, working with the manuscript lists of Villa 1992, 1993, 1994, calculates that 233 fifteenth-century manuscripts contained the *AP*, a figure that indicates the work was "far from being neglected in the fifteenth century." In the fifteenth century 404 manuscripts containing any/all works of Horace were produced in total, i.e., slightly fewer than half as many as exist containing Virgil (around 1,000), who "is likely to have been the most widely read author."

121. Though "editions or even transcriptions of commentaries from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century are lacking," Friis-Jensen 1995a: 231–32 is right to see that "the transition from medieval scholarship to Renaissance humanism probably took the form of development rather than break," and he notes (2008) that medieval commentaries were so thorough and useful they continued to be used by later scholars. On the fifteenth-century commentary tradition, see further Weinberg 1961.

122. Hardison and Golden 1995: 3. See also Friis-Jensen 1995a: 230 on these early printed editions; he puts the number of them at sixty-nine (with another six that contain at least one ode), of which forty-four contain the *Ars Poetica*, concluding, "Again there is no evidence to show that this work suffered any neglect in the fifteenth century."

123. See further Enenkel and Nellen 2013 on this trend. Weinberg 1961: 179 notes as extraordinary in this period the 1566 commentary in Italian (not Latin) by Giovanni Fabrini.

124. See Friis-Jensen 1995a: 234–35. On Landino's life and work, see further Weinberg 1961: 79–81, Pieper 2013, Stadeler 2014.

125. Friis-Jensen 1995a: 235, 236 (he is evidently not counting Antonio Mancinelli's commentary of 1492, which seems to have been printed only in a collection, rather than on its own); on Badius's commentary, see further also Weinberg 1961: 81–85, Hardison and Golden 1995: 160–63, Mañas Nuñez 2012: 231. Friis-Jensen also sees as important in this period a commentary by a pupil of Guarino, as he identifies him (1995a: 239, 2008).

accompanied by the scholia of Porphyrio and Pseudo-Acro and a commentary by Landino's fellow humanist scholar Antonio Mancinelli, as *Horatius cum quattuor commentariis* (first published 1492).[126] The result of this edition was, according to Weinberg, to make of the *Ars Poetica* "something very special for Quinquecento readers," for "Horace's work was no longer a theory of poetry, but the theory of poetry, the summum of all useful ideas about the art," and the ever-proliferating accretions of commentary upon the poem made such volumes "a repository for everything that was being thought about poetry in the humanistic period and during the Renaissance up to about 1545."[127] Friis-Jensen 1995a[128] argues from this evidence that Horace's *Ars Poetica* was far more widely known and read, and considered far more important in the fifteenth century, than has previously been acknowledged. This is evident also in the "material growth" of its tradition, where, as "more things [are] added to the *Ars Poetica*" such as commentaries and essays, so it was itself "constantly applied to more things."[129]

The sixteenth century saw a conflation of the Horatian and Aristotelian literary critical traditions. For the first time Horace's poem did not stand alone: Aristotle's *Poetics*, certainly neglected if not exactly lost, enjoyed a rebirth beginning in 1508 with the production of a Greek text by Aldus, the *editio princeps*. There are four primary witnesses to Aristotle's text, two of which preserve the *Poetics* in Greek: *Parisinus Graecus* 1741 (A), written around the middle of the tenth century or its second half, and *Riccardianus* 46 (B), probably mid-twelfth century.[130] Tarán and Gutas attribute the revival of interest in the *Poetics* to the appearance of these two manuscripts in Italy during the fifteenth century, after which they were copied numerous times, culminating in the Aldine edition. They arrived to a climate of "lively interest in literary criticism and theory" for which the *Ars Poetica* formed much of the existing basis. The *Poetics* was quickly taken up "in the same light . . . as a welcome

126. Pieper 2013: 221–22; on the role of Porphyrio and Pseudo-Acro in inspiring and shaping the later exegetical tradition, see Weinberg 1961: 72–85, Friis-Jensen 1995a: 239, 1997a, 2008, Enenkel and Nellen 2013, Pieper 2013: 226.

127. Weinberg 1961: 85, 110.

128. Cf. also Pieper 2013.

129. There is also "methodological growth," whereby the nature and concerns of the commentary itself begin to shift; on some key stages in this process see Weinberg 1961: 85–110, Hardison and Golden 1995: 237–40, Wilson 2009, Golden 2010: 392–93.

130. Tarán and Gutas 2012: 36; the other two manuscripts are in translation, one into Latin (see my introduction, n117 and further Friis-Jensen 1995b: 362, Tarán and Gutas 2012: 39–40), the other into Arabic (by Abū Bišr, before 934; on the Syro-Arabic tradition of Aristotle's works, see Copeland and Sluiter 2009, Tarán and Gutas 2012: 77–128). On the Aldine edition, see Tarán and Gutas 2012: 38–48.

supplement and complement"[131] to Horace's work, and the two traditions became "fused and confused,"[132] as evidenced in Francesco Filippi Pedemonte's 1546 commentary on the *Ars Poetica*: Pedemonte proceeded by citing passages from the *Poetics* to match sections of the *Ars Poetica*, the first of numerous efforts to do so. So, "Horace ceased to be Horace and Aristotle never became Aristotle; each grew, instead, into a vast monument containing all the multiform remains of the literary past."[133] Tarán and Gutas seem to view the tradition that existed around the *Ars Poetica* as regrettably responsible for the subsuming of Aristotle's *Poetics* into the same, with the result that the latter did not come to be properly understood and appreciated as a work altogether distinct in its intent, concerns, and circumstances of composition.[134] It is equally the case, however, that the arrival of the *Poetics* may be seen as consigning the *Ars Poetica* to the bookshelf of reference works on literary composition,[135] for this poem, which had been regarded and valued as an exemplary work of art in its own right throughout the Middle Ages, began to be put to use as one of what was now a pair, for its contents and prescriptions (not its form). Yet even in an age where the *Ars Poetica* was "an object of research," Boileau and Pope would nevertheless approach it as "a living document,"[136] as their medieval predecessors had done, crafting poems that,

131. Tarán and Gutas 2012: 39–40.

132. Bogue 1975: 5. On Pedemonte's commentary, see Weinberg 1961: 111–18; Pedemonte's method of comparing Horace and Aristotle was quickly taken up by numerous other scholars (see Weinberg 1961: 118–35, 156–62). García Berrio 1978 notes also the reverse: that the *AP* entered the earliest, sixteenth-century commentaries on Aristotle's *Poetics* to a notable degree.

133. Weinberg 1961: 47. Weinberg's two-volume work, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, remains monumental on the Horatian tradition, the Aristotelian tradition, and the two traditions together; Herrick 1946 also remains useful on the latter. Weinberg rightly points out that prior to 1545, it was not that the *Poetics* was wholly unknown to scholars working on the *AP*; rather, "such knowledge did not fundamentally affect their general reading and interpretation of the Horatian text" (111). With the re-arrival of Aristotle, however, a school of thought grew up, propounded by some of the scholars working in Pedemonte's footsteps, including Francesco Robortello, Vincenzo Maggi, and Jason De Nores, as well as Scaliger, that Horace's *AP* could not be properly understood in the absence of the *Poetics* and Hellenistic literary theory (Mañas Nuñez 2012: 242).

134. Cf. Weinberg 1961: 154–55: "there was no slightest intimation" that the *Poetics* and the *AP* "address themselves to essentially different problems, that they use widely different methods, and that they produce statements of a completely different nature about poetry."

135. Bogue 1975: 6 similarly suggests that "Renaissance criticism" (that is, the period when Aristotle's *Poetics* had been rediscovered, and Horace's *AP* was being increasingly assimilated with it) "intensified the schism between form and content in the *Ars*."

136. Hardison and Golden 1995: 173.

Horatian in spirit and in much of their detail,[137] rendered the archetype apposite for a distinct time and place.

The Unity of the Poem

Despite its incomparable importance, especially during the Middle Ages and the early modern period, the *Ars Poetica* has been unduly harmed by its longstanding treatment as a set of puzzles to be solved: What was its title? Its date? Its genre? Who are the *Pisones*? What is the poem about? And how do its disparate sections relate to one another and cohere? While I venture some solutions to these problems in this introduction and in the chapters that follow, I espouse above all approaching the poem on its own terms. Since it is a work of literary art, we should be ready to see, hear, and feel the sights, sounds, and sensations it offers.[138] Michèle Lowrie framed her monograph, *Horace's Narrative Odes*, as an effort to answer "the central bothersome question of Horatian lyric: what keeps these poems together when they try so hard to drive themselves apart?"[139] As Freudenburg 1999 summarizes, Lowrie identifies "not architectural 'blocks' neatly stacked, but interpenetrations of imagery, sense, and technique that carry us forward in our sense-making work, binding the smattering of parts into a whole," where any unity is "gathered up, asserted, and continually revised." This study attempts to answer the same question as it pertains to the *Ars Poetica*[140] and extends Lowrie's approach to another Horatian work. Just as readers of the *Odes* discovered "triads, pentads, enneads, and decads, with the poems in each group and the groups themselves disposed in an abstract pattern such as concentric framing or chiasmus,"[141] the *Ars Poetica* has long been seen as falling into two sections,

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137. Of the 1,100 lines of Boileau's poem, for example, over 100 may be identified as coming from the *AP*, and another 100 from other Horatian works; Golden 2010: 396.

138. Consider the quotation from Susan Sontag, "Against Interpretation," given at Porter 1995: 97: "What is important is to recover our senses. We must learn to *see* more, to *hear* more, to *feel* more. Our task is not to find the maximum amount of content in a work of art, much less to squeeze more content out of the work than is already there. Our task is to cut back content so that we can *see* the thing at all."

139. Lowrie 1997: 3.

140. Edgar Allan Poe's remark, cited by Santirocco 1986: 175, that "what we term a long poem is, in fact, merely a succession of short ones" is illuminating in this context.

141. Santirocco 1986: 3; noting the exhaustive investigation since the second half of the nineteenth century into the matter, he adds that "by the turn of the century an investigator could justly complain that not a single possibility had been left untried." Harrison 2007c: 272 identifies Collinge 1961, Commager 1962, and West 1967 as foremost among these efforts.

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