

# Horace, Vergil, and the Jews of Rome\*

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The two men, Pope John Paul in a white robe and Chief Rabbi Elio Toaff in a prayer shawl, stood side by side in Rome's main synagogue for a moment of silent prayer. Then they joined in an enthusiastic embrace. The throng of 1,000 people packed into the ornate synagogue, 40 of whom were survivors of Nazi death camps, burst into thunderous applause. Some wept openly.

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The links between the history, literature and art of the ancient near east on the one hand, and of Greece and Rome on the other remain enigmatic and fascinating. Could Linear A be a Semitic language? Were the "Ahhiyawa" of the Boghazkeuy documents Homer's Achaeans?<sup>1</sup> Are Deucalion and Noah related? Do those oversexed wives of Potiphar, Anubis, Proetus, and Theseus share the same DNA? Is it accidental that the poses of sixth-century Greek *Kouroi* and *Korai* should appear somewhat Egyptian?

The spade too has revealed a lively commerce between east and west in the Mycenaean world, from Syria to Italy. Herodotus has recorded the Persians' confrontations with Lydia and Ionia, culminating at Marathon, Salamis and Plataea—and finally Persepolis. Alexander brought down barriers between Hellene and "barbarian," spreading abroad the treasure of Persia, and merging Greek *πόλις* with oriental monarchy. Phoenician traders dealt with the Greek colonies of Magna Graecia and the Etruscans. Rome's eventual collision with Carthage marked her own encounter with the Semitic world. Of all that intercourse, perhaps the most intriguing, certainly one of the most important and best documented, is that of Judaism with the Greco-

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References in the notes to the list of *Works Consulted* appended to this article will be made by author (date where needed) and page alone. The text for Horace is that of F. Klingner (*Horatii Opera*, fifth ed. Teubner, Stuttgart [1970]); for Vergil, that of R. Mynors (*Vergil Opera Omnia*, Oxford Classical Texts 1969). English translations of the *LXX* are adapted from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha*. Revised Standard Version (New York, 1977).

1. Webster, 9, 25, 67, 146–47, 248.

Roman world.<sup>2</sup> In 63 BCE Pompey the Great ended, until our own times, the fact of an independent Jewish state in Palestine, an independence long fought-for against the Assyrian, Babylonian and Seleucid, Roman, Ottoman and British empires, and reasserted against repeated military defeats, destructions of Jerusalem and her temples, and mass deportations, beginning with the Babylonian captivity of 597 BCE. Judaism acquired a cultural duality as it adapted itself linguistically to the regions in which it took root. Except perhaps in parts of Judaea itself, the classical Hebrew of the Law and the Prophets ceased to be the Jews' spoken language, and even in liturgy and scripture it was gradually replaced by Aramaic or Greek.<sup>3</sup> Assimilation to Greek in the diaspora communities did not result in a break in scriptural traditions, however, but rather in their even wider dissemination even throughout the gentile world as well.

According to the famous *Letter of Aristeas*, Ptolemy II Philadelphus (3rd century BCE) ordered that a Greek version of the Hebrew scriptures be produced for his library, a task duly carried out by seventy-two Hebrew scholars from Jerusalem in retreat on the island of Pharos: the *Septuaginta*, or the "LXX."<sup>4</sup> From Alexandria copies of the LXX followed the diaspora communities across the Mediterranean, and they must have been available for study in the synagogues, and perhaps even at the booksellers. It is odd that one finds so few direct references to the LXX in classical authors. H.J. Cadbury accepts only one such reference as certain, Longinus' citation of Genesis 1 as 'a worthy conception of God' (9.9),<sup>5</sup> but the authenticity of even this passage has been questioned.<sup>6</sup> Frequent citations of the LXX are found in the early Greek Christian writers, naturally, for whom "scripture" meant the LXX, the "Old Testament."

A large diaspora community existed in the Rome of Augustus, estimated at as many as 50,000 persons.<sup>7</sup> Inscriptions from the six known Jewish catacombs in Rome reveal the existence of eleven synagogues serving a largely Greek-speaking population (burial inscriptions are 76% Greek, 23% Latin, 1% Hebrew).<sup>8</sup> That community certainly existed as early as 139 BCE, the year that some Jews were banned from the city for active proselytising. By 59 they were certainly in the city, to judge from Cicero's *pro Flacco* (Flaccus had

2. For further bibliography, see Goldenberg, Grant (1973), Leon, Schäfer, Stern, Wardy, and Whittaker.

3. Leon, 75; Lieberman (1942), 2-3, 19-28, 30, *et passim*. On the eventual demise of Hellenistic Judaism see Bevan, 66-67.

4. Cadbury, 978; Hadass, 66-84.

5. Cadbury, 978; Roberts, 231-37.

6. Cadbury, 978.

7. Leon, 15, 135, 257.

8. Leon, 76.

been charged with withholding the authorized temple tax in his province of Asia), an oration which reveals the great orator's alarm at potential disturbances by large, vociferous, close-knit, and influential Jewish street demonstrations.<sup>9</sup> The Stoic Poseidonius, and Apollonius Molo, Cicero's own professor of rhetoric at Rhodes, disliked the Jews, and they may have contributed to Cicero's rhetorical ammunition.<sup>10</sup> Marcus Terentius Varro was sympathetic, regarding Judaism in a positive light when compared with the dark side of Roman *superstitio*.<sup>11</sup> Roman Jews certainly included full citizens, although the catacomb inscriptions testify to humble occupations.<sup>12</sup>

Julius Caesar, a consummate *popularis*, repeatedly favoured the Jews in his legislation, and so they were devastated at his assassination.<sup>13</sup> But despite the catastrophic events abroad in Judaea in the first centuries BCE and CE, their religious freedom in Rome was firmly maintained by the emperors Augustus, Claudius, Domitian and others.<sup>14</sup> (The situation does appear to have changed for the worse under Christian emperors.<sup>15</sup>) Juvenal (100 CE) offers a highly-coloured satirical sketch of a beggarly, evangelical, highly-visible ethnic group that blatantly offended the moral and aesthetic proprieties of conservative Romans. Juvenal's early second-century Jews are pictured camping like gypsies on religious and historic sites, telling fortunes, and stirring up family antagonisms with their active proselytizing.<sup>16</sup> While his portrait may have had some basis in fact, the Jews seem not to have made political or economic demands; they were simply "tolerated as one more harmless oriental superstition,"<sup>17</sup> associated with the nation Rome had repeatedly crushed. The great irony is that the Jewish community in Rome would far outlast the *Pax Romana* itself.

The synagogues of Augustan Rome were there to be seen in the Jewish quarters, particularly Trastevere.<sup>18</sup> The Jews must have been highly visible on their way to synagogues on the Sabbath, and to their schools, maintaining unique dietary customs, social exclusiveness, strict religious and moral code,

9. Leon, 5–8; Wardy, 596–613; Schäfer, 180–82. Cicero's phrase is "quanta concordia" (*Flacc.*, 28.66).

10. Whittaker, 109; Schäfer, 21–22, 182.

11. M.T. Varro (cited by Augustine, *de Consens. Evang.*, 1.23); Schäfer, 37, 183.

12. Leon, 233–38.

13. Leon, 8–10.

14. Leon, 19–45. Augustus and Agrippa were the patrons of two synagogues in Rome, the Augustesians and Agrippesians: see Leon, 140–42; Grant (1971), 175–82. For Caligula's response to the Jews see Schäfer 136–45; for Claudius' and Domitian's, *ibid.*, 145–52; 113–16.

15. Leon, 44–45; Grant (1973), 284–87.

16. Juvenal, 3.12–16, 296; 6.159, 543, 547; Persius, 5. 79–84. See Whittaker, 32–34, 71; on proselytizing in general see Schäfer, 106–18.

17. Whittaker, 13.

18. Leon, 135–37; Whittaker, 13.

and close family ties. Information from some Roman writers about Jewish beliefs, their sacred books and national history, is garbled, however (e.g., Tacitus, Strabo, Diodorus and Pompeius Trogus). Varro, Alexander Polyhistor, Timagenes of Alexandria, Plutarch and Josephus seem more reliable.<sup>19</sup> It was understood that Jews circumcised their male infants, ate no pork, refused to work on Saturdays, fasted on their Great Sabbath, had a code of laws written by a man called Moses (or was it a woman called Moso?).<sup>20</sup> They allowed no image of their one, jealous god in their temple or synagogues. Their rights to idleness on the Sabbath, exemption from military service, and the imperially authorized collection of the annual temple tax amounted to a unique legal status. Schäfer sums up these Roman attitudes thus:

The Roman attitude toward the Jews in much more complex than the Greek, and especially the Egyptian .... [T]hey sensed an appeal for which they reacted either with sympathy and indeed conversion, or with fear, dislike, and, indeed, hatred. But they did not remain impassive, and even in their hatred paid tribute to the *sceleratissima* and *taeterrima gens* of the Jews.

Concrete references in Augustan writers to Roman Jews and their customs are frequent and familiar.<sup>21</sup> Suetonius (*Aug.* 76) quotes a letter of Augustus to Tiberius in which he wittily compares a day when he was too busy to eat before sundown, to a Jewish Sabbath (Yom Kippur, presumably). The poet Tibullus (1.3.15–18) refers to “Saturni dies” (the weekly Sabbath) as not a day to journey too far away from Delia! As *magister amoris*, Ovid urges his pupils to escape from disagreeable mistresses even on the Sabbath if they must (*Remed.* 217–20); conversely, it could still be an auspicious day to begin a *new* quest or courtship (*A.A.* 1.75–76, 413–16).

*Orazio satiro* offers the most personal and varied glimpses of Jews in Augustan Rome. When Tigellius died, the whole guild of Jewish *flautiste* was plunged into mourning, along with various snake-oil salesmen, beggars, dancers and burlesque clowns in the city. In the same satire (1.2.139–43), any critic who would deny him his right to write such satire is threatened with the vengeance of an angry mob of poets who will force his painful conversion by sheer force of numbers—just like a mob of proselytizing Jews! *Satire* 1.5 pokes ironic fun at a Jew named Apella, one apparently gullible enough to believe Gnatia’s story of temple incense melting without fire.<sup>22</sup>

19. Whittaker, 16–32 *et passim*; Schäfer, 93–105.

20. Leon (61) cites Alexander Polyhistor (Suda A 1129). On Polyhistor see Feldman (1953), 76–77.

21. See Schäfer, 84–86, 107–08.

22. “Apella” (*Ἀπελλῆς*) appears frequently of freedmen in later inscriptions (5x in *CIL X*; 3x in Cicero). This is likely a real individual. Porphyrio sees a reference here to a *curtus Indaeus* (an implicit pun on *a-pelle* is possible). Braun suggests a Hebrew origin in “Abelle” (275).

(The Epicurean in Horace would never believe such a thing.) *Satire* 1.9 presents a comic situation in which the poet seizes desperately upon a chance encounter with his dear friend Aristius Fuscus to try to elude a certain bore on the street.<sup>23</sup> Fuscus plays dumb. He cannot keep the "appointment" Horace desperately invents because it is the "Thirtieth Sabbath": to do so would affront the circumcised Jews.<sup>24</sup> "I'm not religious!" implores Horace. "Ah, but I am," the wicked Fuscus triumphs! (If Professor Feldman of Yeshiva University is correct, Fuscus' "Thirtieth Sabbath" is Yom Kippur, the "Sabbath of Sabbaths." Feldman has also pointed out that Fuscus was an *amicus* of Asinius Pollio, a Roman very well-connected with the Jewish community in Rome and a friend of Herod the Great.)<sup>25</sup> The last of four "certain" satirical references to Jews in Horace accepted by Menachem Stern (1974) is *Epistle* 2.2 183–89, which mentions the fabulous date-palm groves of Cleopatra at Jericho, a gift from Antony which was farmed for her (and later owned?) by Herod.<sup>26</sup> Herod himself was probably well known at Rome for his adventures, cruelty and extravagances, particularly in rebuilding the Temple.<sup>27</sup> Macrobius, (2.4.11) quotes a quip of Augustus: "I would rather be Herod's pig than his son!"

The Jews were such a familiar presence in Rome, then, that they were the target of frequent jokes. The obvious references in Roman writers have encouraged attempts to uncover more elusive literary allusions, including any to the *LXX* (although there is still a strong scepticism that the Romans of the time would possess, to quote Nisbet, "such curious learning").<sup>28</sup> Cardinal Desprez, in the 1793 Delphin edition of Horace, had cited some 30 passages which he thought were inspired by the *LXX*. In 1878, Guglielmo Braun published an article in *Archeografo Triestino*, "La originaria nazionalità di Orazio," in which he concluded that Horace's own ethnic origins must have been Alexandrian Jewish, noting his freedman-father's Italian background in Venusia<sup>29</sup> (where fifth-century Jewish catacombs have been found),<sup>30</sup> his keen awareness of Jewish activities, and many passages throughout his po-

23. See Goldenberg, 436–42 and Schäfer on the passage.

24. Feldman ("The Enigma of the Thirtieth Sabbath," a paper presented at the American Philological Association's annual meeting (New York City, 29 December 1987). Yom Kippur could not fall later, in fact, than the 28th Sabbath in the Jewish calendar. This "Sabbath of Sabbaths" can fall on any weekday.) On the Sabbath in general see Schäfer, 82–92. Herod is referred to by Persius (5.184) in connection with the Sabbath (*recutitaque sabbata*): 90–91.

25. Feldman (1953), 77–78.

26. Stern, 321.

27. See Feldman (1953), 78 n. 27 on Josephus' date for the rebuilding of the temple (A.J.12.7.6); Grant (1971), 150–74.

28. Nisbet, 66.

29. Braun, 248, 276–77; cf. Leon, 55 note.

30. Mras, 134.

etry in which he was sure he had found allusions to the *LXX*, especially Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Wisdom of Solomon, Job, Jeremiah and Isaiah. Otto Seeck (1902) was also persuaded that Horace was of Jewish stock,<sup>31</sup> and Thaddeus Zielinski (1927), Iacob Handel (1927, 1928) and Karl Mras (1936) all agreed that Horace was familiar with the *LXX*, and added to that growing list of parallels. Karl Mras had looked for an eastern origin in Horace's *cognomen* "Flaccus." (His anthropological sources had classified both Mongols and Semites with the longest ears!) and there were certainly Jews living in Apulia and Calabria.<sup>32</sup> Braun had compared Horace with Heine; Mras compared him with Lucian (himself a Syrian) for his spirited self-revelation.<sup>33</sup> While Mras concluded that many of the Desprez and Braun examples should be carefully considered, he did caution, "Mit seinem Judentum ist es also nichts."<sup>34</sup> W.H. Alexander (1942) proposed that the mother Horace never mentions had herself been Jewish. Franz Dornseiff (1951) supplied further parallels, if more guardedly: "... geht hervor, dass mit Bibelkenntnis bei Horaz gerechnet werden muss. Der Vater ist anscheinend mindestens ein Proselyt gewesen."<sup>35</sup> One must side, it seems, with Mras. There is nothing to *prove* that Horace was himself Jewish.<sup>36</sup>

It is nonetheless worthwhile reexamining the most striking parallels between the *LXX* and Horace identified by Desprez and his successors, and reassessing the question whether Horace could have known the *LXX* at first-hand, whether from the Roman synagogues or merely from private study. In total, Braun, Zielinski, Handel, Mras and Dornseiff list approximately eighty different passages of Horace and ninety-four passages of the *LXX* in their parallels, and in the following proportions by percentage and total number of passages:

LXX (94)	Horace (80)
Proverbs: 35.1% (33)	<i>Satires</i> 1: 16.25% (13)
Sirach: 23.4% (22)	<i>Satires</i> 2: 3.75% (3)
Ecclesiastes: 8.5% (8)	<i>Epodes</i> : 7.5% (6)
Wisdom of Solomon: 8.5% (7)	<i>Odes</i> 1: 11.25% (9)
Psalms: 8.5% (8)	<i>Odes</i> 2: 18.75% (15)

31. Seeck, 134.

32. Mras, 74.

33. Braun, 282; Mras, 78-79.

34. Mras, 74.

35. Dornseiff, 65. Nisbet is not convinced the Romans would have possessed such "curious learning" (66).

36. Tras, 77; Stern, 32: "Yet I must state that no positive proof, however slight, had been adduced to buttress these speculations, and the Jewish ancestry of Horace should probably be relegated to the realm of pure conjecture."

Job: 3.18% (3)	<i>Odes</i> 3: 18.75% (15)
Tobit: 3.18% (3)	<i>Odes</i> 4: 10% (8)
Isaiah 3. 1.8% (3)	<i>Epistles</i> 1. 10% (8)
Jeremiah 2. 1.2% (2)	<i>Epistles</i> 2. 1.25% (1)
Songs of Songs 1: 0.6% (1)	<i>Ars Poetica</i> . 2.5% (2)
Genesis: 1.06% (1)	
Exodus: 1.06% (1)	
Ezekial: 1.06% (1)	
Zachariah 1.06% (1)	

These figures show a high frequency of parallels in Horace with the “wisdom” books, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), and the Psalms. The proposed Horatian passages come most frequently from *Satires I*, *Epistles*, *Odes I*, and *Epodes*. Some do seem far-fetched, others moral commonplaces or derived from common sources such as Hesiod or Homer, but there do remain others which (Mras conceded) deserve further consideration.<sup>37</sup>

Three *LXX* passages in particular show persuasive similarities with Horace. In his first satire Horace uses the simile of the ant as a model of hard work and prudence (*Sat.* 1.1.32–40):

parvola—nam exemplo est—magni formica laboris  
ore trahit quodcumque potest atque addit acervo  
quem struit, haud ignara ac non incauta futuri. (32–34)

Horace's ant toils throughout the year till January (“Aquarius,” 36), when she has the wisdom (“sapiens,” 39) to enjoy the fruits of her labours indoors (37–38). Horace's greedy man justifies his compulsive striving by citing the ant, and he lets nothing stop his mad pursuit after money (38–40). The famous ant-passage from Proverbs (6.6–8) urged the sluggard to consider *her* ways (ὁδοῦς) and become the wiser (σοφώτερος). She (“he” in Greek) toils through summer and harvest to heap up her larder, but knows when to stop. Horace's irony turns the tables on the miser.

*Satire* 1.8 centres around the bizarre image of a talking Priapus, who relates how a carpenter made him out of a useless piece of figwood, after deciding not to make a stool.

Olim truncus eram ficulnus, inutile lignum,  
cum faber, incertus scamnum faceretne Priapum,  
maluit esse deum. (1–3)

37. Braun argues that Augustus' affectionate jibe at Horace as “purissimum penem” (*Vit. Hor.*, 2 [Klingner]: Braun reads “putissimum” after Scaliger) refers to circumcision (274–75).

The carpenter then adds a protruding male member painted a bright red (5): "obscaenique ruber porrectus ab inguine palus," before placing the figure in a garden. (Collodi began his novel *Pinocchio* with a very similar deliberation by a carpenter.)

The Wisdom of Solomon (13.10–17—cf. Jeremiah 10.3) deplores superstitious appeals to gods of gold, silver, or stone made by human hands, then describes the technique of a carpenter (13.11) who first makes a useful piece of furniture from a handy-sized piece of wood, using what is left over, crooked and barky, for an idol. Fashioning it skillfully into a human or animal shape, he polishes it, paints it red, nails it securely to a wall, then prays to it about his property, family weddings and children, though he knows the thing cannot possibly help.

Passages from the *Ars Poetica* (60–63)<sup>38</sup> and Sirach (14.18–21) constitute the third parallel:

ut silvae foliis pronos mutantur in annos,  
prima cadunt: ita verborum vetus interit aetas,  
et iuvenum ritu florent modo nata vigentque  
debemur morti nos nostraque.

Compare Sirach:

ὡς φύλλον θάλλον ἐπὶ δένδρου δάσεως τὰ μὲν καταβάλλει,  
ἄλλα δὲ φύει, οὕτως γειεῖα σακρός καὶ αἵματος ἢ μὲν τελευτᾷ,  
ἑτέρα δὲ γεινᾶται. (14.18).

("as with a flourishing leaf on a spreading tree which sheds some and puts forth others, so with the generations of flesh and blood: one dies, while another is born.")

Even allowing for an apparent Homeric prototype,<sup>39</sup> the LXX-Horace correspondences are yet more striking. Sirach had compared leaves growing on trees to the generations of flesh and blood: as a tree casts off leaves and grows others back, so one human generation dies while the next is born (18–19). The Homeric passage (*Iliad* 6.146–49) runs out as a common source, but Horace continues on ("debemur morti nos nostraque," 63) very much like Sirach:

μετ' αὐτοῦ πᾶν ἔργον σηπόμενον ἐκλείπει, καὶ ὁ ἐργαζόμενος αὐτο  
ἀπελεύσεται. (14.19)

("Every work decays and fails, and the man who fashions it will pass away!")

38. Mras, 76.

39. Brink missed Sirach as a parallel here (II [1971], 146–51).



In *Epode* 16 ("Altera iam teritur") Horace attacks civil strife in Rome with the prophetic vehemence of a Jeremiah ("vate me," 66), lashing out at their mindless continuation of the wars, and shaming them with examples of their own past glories against foreign foes (3–8).<sup>40</sup> They are a godless generation under a bloodcurse, and doomed to perish (9). A desolate Rome is foretold, overrun once again by wild beasts (10), a foreign foe on horseback trampling the ashes of the city with clattering hoofs (12). That apocalyptic scene fades with the sacrilege: the bones of the deified Romulus uprooted and scattered to the very winds and suns from which they have been piously protected by their tomb in the forum (13–14):

quaeque carent ventis et solibus ossa Quirini  
—nefas videre—dissipabit insolens.

The Roman prophet urges Rome's saving remnant to imitate the Phocaeans of old, leave Rome, never to return until iron floats, or waters flood the face of Italy (25–29), or the tiger lies down with the deer or the dove with the kite, or cattle lose their fear of lions, or goats of the sea (30–34)! That remnant (35–38) must fly over Tuscan Sea to Ocean, where Blessed Isles and Age of Gold await them in a land of vines, olives, milk and honey (39–40). Bears, vipers, disease, killing heat, rains, drought will be no more (51–55), for Jupiter will end them forever (56). Ulysses did not reach those isles, or Argo or Phoenician ship, for they have been prepared, untouched by the world, for a chosen race. Thus saith the prophet (59–66).

*Epode* 16 is an exhortation of great poetic power, merging Greek and Roman history and myth with apocalyptic literature and Roman landscape in an Archilochean form. Horace's imagery is rich and exotic, his tone deadly earnest. Rome must repent of its iniquity or perish.<sup>41</sup> Echoes of Jeremiah in *Epode* 16 were proposed by Braun.<sup>42</sup> Jeremiah comprises a sequence of biting oracles against Judah and Jerusalem for turning away from Yahweh. Israel has changed its god (2.9–12) and committed two evils:

ὅτι δύο ποιηρὰ ἐποίησεν ὁ λαός μου. ἐμὲ ἐγκρατέλιπον,  
πηγὴν ὕδατος ζωῆς· καὶ ὤρυξαν ἑαυτοῖς λάκκους  
σιντετριμμένους, οἳ οὐ ὕδωρ. (2.13)

("They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hew out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.")

40. Brink, II 147 (*Iliad* 6.146–49). On Jewish familiarity with Homer as a school text, see Lieberman (1950), 108, 103.

41. See Dornseiff, 44–63; Snell, 267–72; Fraenkel, 42–55; Senay, 153–55. For the enormous bibliography on this topic, see Setaioli.

42. Braun, 269.

And Israel has suffered for it already:

*ἐπ' αὐτὸν ὠρύοντο λέοντες καὶ ἔδωκαν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτῶν,  
οἱ ἔταξαν τὴν γῆν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔρημον, καὶ πόλεις  
αὐτοῦ κατεσκάφησαν παρὰ τὸ μὴ κατοικεῖσθαι. (2.15)*  
("The lions have roared against him, they have roared loudly. They have made his land  
a waste; his cities are in ruins, without inhabitants.")

But horrors even worse remain for Jerusalem, the "painted harlot" (4.30–31) loathed by her ex-lovers. Her inhabitants will fly from the sound of the horseman from the north, from a race whose tongue they will not comprehend (5.15): "Flee for safety, O people of Benjamin, from the midst of Jerusalem!" exhorts the prophet. But although her people's sins remain fresh (6.7), a remnant may yet be gleaned as from a vine (6.9). Should Judah repent she may yet remain (7.5–7) in the place promised to her forefathers forever (cf. 11.5). Otherwise, invaders will root out the bones of their kings, princes, priests, and prophets from their tombs and cast them out before the sun, moon, stars, and host of heaven (8.1–4). And yet, if they would only hear His voice he would "perform the oath which [he] swore to [their] fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey" (11.5).

Horace's denunciation of Rome as "impia devoti sanguinis aetas" (9) and "omnis execrata civitas" (36) is strikingly reminiscent of Jeremiah; but his saving remnant has a paradise already prepared for the righteous ("piis," 66), while Jeremiah foresees refuge for none if Judah does not repent (5.1–3). The amenities of these two paradises are similar: wheat, olives, figs, honey, and milk. In Rome and Jerusalem alike, only drought, death, and misery will abide (16.53–62; Jer. 14.1–6). Horace's mosaic of Greek sea-imagery, Italian geography, Golden Age myth, and Hebrew apocalyptic prophecy, produces a poetic statement of grandeur and power.

Horace's devotion and gratitude to his freedman father has always been admired. While respect for parents was a traditional virtue in Greece and Rome, nowhere was it more heart-felt and fundamental than among the Jews: *υἱὸς πανούργου ὑπήκοος πατρί. υἱὸς δὲ ἀνήκοος ἐν ἀπωλείᾳ* (Prov. 13.1). "A wise son listens to his father, but a son who does not listen is lost". *Satire 2* begins with the Jewish flute girls in Rome ("ambubaiae"), then inveighs against young men's involvements with prostitutes and married women, frequent topics in the Wisdom Books also (Prov. 6.24, Sir. 9.4.6, 9.9.26). Such advice is given as from father to son in Proverbs 7.1–27:

*υἱέ, φύλασσε ἐμοὺς λόγους, τὰς δὲ ἐμὰς ἐντολάς  
κρίψον παρὰ σεαυτῶ... φύλαξον ἐμὰς ἐντολάς, καὶ  
βιώσεις, τοὺς δὲ ἐμοὺς λόγους ὡσπερ κόρας ὀμμάτων. (7.1–2)*  
("My son, keep my words and treasure up my commandments with you; keep my commandments and live, keep my words like the pupils of your eyes.")

Warnings follow against adulterous women who seduce young men (5–27), as in *Satire* 1.4, where Horace's father cautioned him against prostitutes and adultresses (105–21), stressing the grave threat to his reputation.

ne sequerer moechas, concessa cum venere uti  
possem: "deprensū non bella est fama Treboni"  
aiebat. "sapiens, vitatu quidque petitu 115  
sit melius, causas reddet tibi; mi satis est si  
traditum ab antiquis morem servare tuamque,  
dum custodis eges, vitam famamque tueri  
incolumem possum; simul ac duraverit aetas  
membra animumque tuum, nabis sine cortice." sic me 120  
formabat puerum dictis ....

The Book of Proverbs likewise urges the son to heed the rules and precepts of the father and mother (6.21–22), and be on guard against adulterous women (γυναικὸς ὑπάνδρου) and slanderous tongues (διαβολῆς γλώσσης ἀλλοτρίας, 6. 24). Only a "bird-brained" youth would follow after them (ὁ δὲ ἐπηκολούθησεν αὐτῇ κεφφωθείς... 7.22). The man who goes into an adulteress will not escape punishment, for she will beggar him (πορνοκόπος πτωχεύσει, 23.21). Proverbs and Horace both caution against adultery and whoring, and threaten stern punishments (death, notoriety and beggary) for such foolishness (*Prov.* 6.24, *Sir.* 9.4.6, 9.9.26).

If Horace was unabused as a child, he attributed it to his father's devotion (*Sat.* 1.6.82–84). In *Satire* 1.2, fatherly advice from Cato [do not stand far off aloof, so you won't be forgotten;] (31–35) to his son, also recalls Proverbs and Sirach. Sirach offers advice about tactful relations with social superiors as well, tact which Horace had demonstrated on his first meeting with Maecenas (*Sat.* 1.6.49–64).

ὑποχωρῶν γίνου, καὶ τόσῳ μᾶλλον τε προσκαλέσεται. μὴ  
ἔμπιπτε, μὴ ἀπωσθῆς καὶ μακρὰν πιστεύσει τοῖς  
πλείονσι λόγοις αὐτοῦ. ἐκ πολλῆς λαλιᾶς πειράσει σε  
καὶ ὡς προσγελῶν ἐξετάσει. (13.9)

("Be reserved and he will invite you that much oftener. Do not push forward, so you won't be repulsed; do not try to speak on equal terms with him; and do not trust most of his words, for with much talk will he test you, and behind his laughter he will be examining you.")

Proverbs too, caution:

μὴ ἀλαζονεύου ἐνώπιον βασιλέως, μηδὲ ἐν τόποις δυναστῶν  
ὑφίστασο. (25.26)

("Do not boast before a prince, or be stubborn in the places of rulers.")

Dornseiff believes that such advice is neither Greek *nor* Roman—that Horace knew his Bible.<sup>43</sup>

Sympotic themes in Proverbs and Sirach also recall Horace. Wine is prescribed for anxiety and pain in Sirach (*ἐν λύπαις... ἐν ὀδύνας*), and it helps forget poverty (*ἐπιλάθωναι τῆς πενίας*, 31.6). Horace praises wine for its power to relieve “*curae*” (3.21.15), “*mentes anxiae*” (17) and “*paupertas*” (18), and for being “*obliviosum*” (2.7.21). Both writers esteem its power to loosen the tongue (Sir. 31.31, 40; *Ode* 3.21.15–16). Horace’s unique praise of his wonderful wine-jar, “*addis cornua pauperi*” (3.21.18), resembles nothing else in Greek or Latin except Ovid’s imitation of it (*Am.*3.11.5). One is tempted to look for a biblical source for it in the Psalms; e.g. *κέρας σωτηρίας μου* (18[17].2), *ὑψωθήνεται ὡς μονοκέρωτος τὸ κέρας σωτηρίας μου* (18[17].2), *ὑψωθήνεται ὡς μονοκέρωτος τὸ κέρας μου* (91[91], 11), *ὑψώσει κέρας λαοῦ αὐτοῦ* (147[146].14). “He will raise up the horn of the people.” Even those familiar trappings of Horatian drinking parties (“*vina*,” “*unguenta*,” “*nimium brevis flores amoenae rosae*,” 2.3.13–16) are the very luxuries that the Wisdom of Solomon rejects:

οἴνου ποτιτελοῦς καὶ μύρων πλουσθῶμεν, καὶ μὴ  
παροδευσάτω ἡμᾶς ἄνθος ἔαρος. στεψώματα ῥόδων  
κάλυξι πρὶν ἢ μαρανθῆναι. (1.7–8).

(“Let us take our fill of costly wines and perfumes, and let no flowers of spring pass us by. Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds ere they wither.”)

There are also similarities to the *LXX* to Horace’s *theology*. Jupiter rules over Kings on earth, and he has subdued the giants (*Ode* 3.1.5–8):

regum timendorum in proprios greges;  
reges in ipsos imperium Jovis,  
clari Giganteo triumpho  
cuncta supercilio moventis.

Compare Psalm 72 [71].11:

καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν αὐτῷ πάντες οἱ βασιλεῖς, πάντα  
τὰ ἔθνη δουλεύσουσιν αὐτῷ.  
 (“All Kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him!”)

(In 3 Maccabees (2.4) even the God of Israel had subdued giants.) Jupiter moves the universe with a look (“*cuncta supercilio moventis*,” 3.1.8) like the God of Sirach (16.18):

43. Dornseiff, 65.

ἰδοῦ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ,  
 ἄβυσσος καὶ γῆ ρῆ ἐπισκοπῇ αὐτοῦ σαλευθήσονται.

("Behold, heaven and the heaven of heaven, the abyss and the earth will tremble at his look.")

Jupiter sends snow and hail to scourge the earth (1.2.1–4):

Iam satis terris nivis atque dirae  
 grandinis misit pater et rubente  
 dextera sacras iaculatus arcis  
 terruit urbem. (4.3.13–15)

Compare Sirach's version of God's cosmic power:

προστάγματι αὐτοῦ κατέσπευσεν χιόνα καὶ ταχύνει  
 ἀστραπὰς κρίματος αὐτοῦ... καὶ διεθρύβησαν  
 λίθοι χαλάζης. (44.131–5)

("By his command he sends down the driving snow and speeds the lightnings of his judgement ... and the hailstones are broken in pieces.")

The "iniquity of the fathers" was a frequent theme in Horace as early as *Epodes* 7 and 16, where the pollution of Remus' blood subjects Rome to the retribution of ceaseless fratricide (7.17–20), and the sacred bones of Romulus will pay the penalty of the blood curse (16.9, 13–14). *Ode* 3.6 opens with echoes of those early poems:

Delicta maiorum immeritus lues,  
 Romane, donec templa refeceris  
 aedisque labentis deorum et  
 foeda nigro simulacra fumo. 4

dis te minorem quod geris imperas.  
 hinc omne principium, huc refer exitum:  
 di multa neglecti dederunt  
 Hesperiae mala luctuosae. 8

Dornseiff argued that the similarities of those poems to Psalm 78 [77] could not be accidental.<sup>44</sup> The "sins of the fathers" occur first in the Decalogue (Exodus 20.5, 34.6–7): God's covenant is to love and forgive, but also to punish:

The God of Job gives as he takes away also: ὁ Κύριος ἔδωκεν, ὁ Κύριος ἀφαίλατο.  
 εἶη τὸ ὄνομα Κυρίου εὐλογημένον  
 (Job 1.2: "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.")

44. *Ibid.*, 79–80.

Dornseiff further insists (supporting the ancient commentator Porphyrius), that the pious mother in *Satire* 2.3.288–95, pleading for her son's recovery from the quartan fever (288–89) is praying in a uniquely Jewish way, and her Jupiter is Yahweh, following an Alexandrian allegorical interpretation:

"Iuppiter, ingentis qui das adimisque dolores,"  
mater ait pueri mensis iam quinque cubantis.<sup>45</sup>

She vows if her son is cured, to bathe him naked in the Tiber on the next fast-day ("illo/mane die, quo tu indicis ieiunia," 290–91). Yahweh is also the God of Thursday fasts as well as Sabbath rest, and Porphyrius comments here that Thursday (*Iovis dies*) was what Horace meant. If Dornseiff is correct, this would actually be the earliest literary reference to planet-named weekdays, earlier even than Tibullus 2.6.<sup>46</sup> The narrator Stertinius is unsympathetic with such superstition. The mother is bound insanely to kill her son, if cured, with a relapse on the chilly Tiber bank (293–95). Fear of the god is responsible! Such *timor dei* is a positive principle of the Jews however:

ἀρχὴ σοφίας φόβος Κυρίου. βουλὴ ἁγίων σύνεσις. (Prov. 9.10)  
("Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the counsel  
of saints is understanding.")

Other themes in Horace parallel the *LXX*: true wealth ("magnas inter opes inops": *Ode* 3.16.25, Prov. 13.7), excess even in wisdom and justice ("insani sapiens nomen ferat, aequus inquit": *Epist.* 1.6.5, Eccl. 7.16); the joys of fleeting youth (*Ode* 1.9, Eccl. 12.1); quiet sleep of the humble (*Ode* 3.1.21, Eccl. 5.11); spring's arrival (*Ode* 1.4, 4.7, Song of Songs 2.11); good counsel in government (*Ode* 3.4.65, Prov. 15.22); justice and fortitude (*Ode* 3.3, Wisdom 3.1, 5.1, 5.16–17); joy at a foe's disaster (*Epod.* 15.23–24, Prov. 1.26); greedy frenzy in building and acquiring land (*Ode* 2.15, 2.18, Isaiah 5.8); the vulnerability of high towers and mountain trees to the winds (*Ode* 2.10, Isaiah 2.12–15, as metaphor of the fate of human arrogance); the servant hiding in the darkness from his master's rage (*Epist.* 2.2.15, Job 7.2–3); the bandit who rises in the dark "to murder the poor and needy" (*Epist.* 1.2.32, Job 24.14 [Hebrew text only!]); and the mother waiting for her long-absent son on the shore or in the road (*Ode* 4.5.9, Tob. 10.7, 11.5). Braun classifies many other short phrases in Horace as Hebraic in flavour. Feldman wonders whether "sub cultro linquere" (*Sat.* 1.9) could be a word-play on

45. *Ibid.*, 80.

46. *Ibid.*, 69; Brind'Amour, 159–60.

circumcision.<sup>47</sup> Dornseiff sees Horace's "virtute me involvo" (*Ode* 3.29.55) as influenced by Wisdom 5.8: ἐνδύσεται θώρακα δικαιοσύνην.<sup>48</sup> ("He shall put on the breastplate of justice.") Braun concluded that the very variety and daring of Horace's Latin ("curiosa felicitas, variis figuris et verbis felicissime audax": Quintilian) were themselves the products of biblical reading.<sup>49</sup> Two *complete* odes have been singled out by both Braun and Dornseiff as heavily influenced by Jewish material. "Integer vitae scelerisque purus" (1.22), according to both, echoes Psalm 23 [22].<sup>50</sup> The innocent and righteous of heart are defended from perils in the wild by divine protection. (It seems curious too that χλοή, the 'green pastures' of Psalm 23 should appear as the name of the lover in *Ode* 1.23.) *Ode* 1.22 is addressed to the same Aristius Fuscus, who showed interest himself in the Jews in *Satire* 1.9. The other *Ode* mentioned is 1.34, "Parcus deorum et infrequens," which Braun interprets as marking the return of Horace from religious scepticism, ("insana sapientia"—"wisdom" gone mad, 2) both to the practical philosophy of "his fathers," and to good fortune.<sup>51</sup> Here too Jupiter, by Dornseiff's *interpretatio Romana*, would be the Yahweh of the Hebrews, firing thunder from his chariots of wrath. Handel sees another parallel between Horace vv. 12–16 and Psalm 113[112]7–8.<sup>52</sup>

valet ima summis  
mutare et insignem attenuat deus  
obscura premens: hinc apicem rapax  
Fortuna cum stridore acuto  
sustulit, hic posuisse gaudet."

ὁ ἐγείρων ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς πτωχόν, καὶ ἀπὸ κοπρίας  
ἀνημῶν πένητα, τοῦ καθίσει αὐτὸν μετὰ ἀρχόντων

("He raises the poor from the earth, and lifts the needy from the dung to seat him with rulers.")

Horace's Diespiter works *his* changes with either providential or vengeful power. The Psalmist's God is providential, but the earth will tremble at his presence (114[113].7; cf. "bruta tellus concutitur," 9–12). By the end of the *Ode* Horace's "deus" has become "Fortuna," thus preparing for the great hymn to her which follows (1.35).

There will be serious differences of opinion (and much scepticism) about some of these parallels. All things considered, however, one might well be persuaded that Horace could have been familiar with the *LXX* first-hand.

47. See note 23 above; Braun sees a Hebrew expression behind *idsea* (271).

48. Dornseiff, 85.

49. Braun, 270.

50. Braun sees a Hebrew origin for "dulce loquentem" (*Ode*, 1.22.24) in Proverbs 7.5 (271); cf. Dornseiff, 75–76.

51. Braun, 281.

52. Handel, 502.

What of Vergil then? Did he, like his friend Horace, know the *LXX*? Surely in the vast literature on Vergil some scholar must somewhere have ventured somewhere to suggest that the *Aeneid* was influenced by the story of Moses and the Exodus. In both, after all, an oppressed people, facing extinction, is given a god-chosen leader with a divine mandate to guide them to a promised land, where they are to be happy and great. During years of wandering they lose faith again and again, defying those same leaders and Heaven's commands, although those leaders are given dramatic confirmations of their missions, whether on mountain top or in underworld. When they do reach their promised lands, battles must be fought with fierce inhabitants. Neither leader is destined to see the full fruits of his labours or the walls of his city, and both will leave their marks upon all subsequent history as founders of their respective nations: the "People of the Book," and the "Aeneidae."

The celebrated question of Vergil's possible relationship to the *LXX*, of course, embroils the *Fourth Eclogue*:

Ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas;  
magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo. (4-5)

What poem is more revered, studied, disputed?<sup>53</sup> Current opinion on the identity of the wondrous child seems to favour a hoped-for offspring of Antony and Octavia, in the euphoric ambience of the Pact of Brundisium during Pollio's consulship (40 BC).<sup>54</sup> Whatever identifications Vergil's contemporaries reached, a generation later it was already a puzzle, and even Pollio's own son could claim to be that child (Serv., *Ecl.* 4.11). Sources for the mystical and apocalyptic in the poem have been sought in Egypt and Etruria, in Pythagoreanism, Isaiah, and the Sibylline Oracles. Catullus 64 and *Epode* 16 of Horace, had clear Roman influence upon the *Eclogue*.

Two literary sources often proposed are Isaiah and *Oracula Sibyllina* III. Those two texts are not mutually exclusive, of course, since Jewish origins are accepted for the oracles generated from prophetic and apocalyptic traditions. Stephen Benko's thorough analysis of those sources (1981) shows heavy concentrations of material from Isaiah and *Sib. Or.* III, as well as echoes of Malachai, Ecclesiastes, Jeremiah, Daniel, Zephaniah, Joel, Nahum, Obadiah, Baruch 2, and the Psalms.<sup>55</sup>

The most intensive cases for Vergil's direct knowledge of Isaiah were made by J.B. Mayor (1907) and I.F. Royds (1918). Mayor concluded that the

53. See Briggs' bibliography.

54. Cf. Williams (1969), 262; (174), 45.

55. Benko, 662. See also Nisbet, 62.



"Cumaeum carmen" was a Jewish oracle from 76 BC or later,<sup>56</sup> and defended (unnecessarily, perhaps) Vergil's open-mindedness for such a borrowing:

I think the above comparison between Vergil and Isaiah naturally leads to the conclusion that the thoughts and expression of the prophet must have somehow filtered through to the poet. Such a view is not without difficulties. The Eclogue is nearer in some respects to the original prophecy of Isaiah than to the subsequent paraphrase, so far as that is to be found in the still extant Sibylline Oracles. I think however, that a careful examination of Vergil's Eclogue suggests he had before him, if not an actual translation from Isaiah, at least some closer paraphrase of Messianic prophecy than we now possess.<sup>57</sup>

Mayor was not quite a full convert to the view that Vergil had read the *LXX* Isaiah, but he *wanted* to believe. Royds did. After examining the parallels he concluded there is a "deep spiritual affinity between Isaiah and Vergil."<sup>58</sup> He rejected the views of Conway, Ward-Fowler, and Mayor that Vergil's child is one of the Caesars. Isaiah's "rod of Jesse" (*ῥάβδος ἐκ τῆς ῥίζης 'Ιεσαὶ καὶ ἀνθός ἐκ τῆς ῥίζης*, 11.1), clearly a human being, is elevated by Vergil to the status of "*Iovis incrementum*" (*Ecl.* 4.49), something more mysterious and divine: "Isaiah's Immanuel is actually a human child who will bring the presence of God to his people."<sup>59</sup> Themes such as the imminent Justice of God, the peaceable Kingdom, a restored earth, abundance of milk, grain, cheese and honey, the the joy of all nature at God's rule, and joy and wonder (of the child in Vergil, of Zion in Isaiah) prevail.<sup>60</sup>

It is Horace who may help us come a little closer yet to a conclusion about Vergil's familiarity with and use of the *LXX* Isaiah. We have seen that there was large, active, visible, (occasionally even aggressive) Jewish community in the Rome of their time, and that Horace was familiar with them and their activities and possibly knew the *LXX* first-hand.

*Epode* 16 and *Eclogue* 4 respond antiphonally to each other, and the parallels between them seem beyond dispute. Even about the relative chronology of the two poems there seems to be a general consensus that Horace followed Vergil in what Carcopino called "une palinodie désenchantée."<sup>61</sup> To Carcopino (skeptical as he was about most other aspects of the evidence) such parallels, whether as parody or palinodie, are "facts," facts from which the priority of *Eclogue* 4 can be deduced.<sup>62</sup> A chronology for an even wider

56. Mayor, 105; Feldman (1953) argues for Vergil's familiarity with Polyhistor (77). See also note 20 above.

57. Mayor, 131. See also Nisbet for an evaluation of the Sibylline sources (66–71).

58. Royds, 14.

59. *Ibid.*, 18.

60. On the "Golden Age" see Williams (1969), 276–85; and Wallace-Hadrill.

61. Carcopino, 108.

62. *Ibid.*, 109; Snell, 237–42; Fraenkel, 51 n.2; Senay, 153–54.

sequence of poems seems to emerge: Catullus 64<sup>63</sup> (pessimistic: end of Golden age, coming of a violent, unjust, godless age of iron)—> *Eclogue* 4 (optimistic: return of a Golden Age with Peace and Justice to Italy, marked by birth of a *Wunderkind*)—> *Epode* 16 (pessimistic: renewal of the civil wars and persistence of the age of iron, Golden Age to be recovered only by abandoning Rome for the Isles of the Blest far off in Ocean's stream)—> *Eclogue* 1 ("realistic" blend of optimism and pessimism: civil war and cruel expropriations have spoiled Italian Arcadia; a youthful "Deus" on earth can redeem it, friendship can soften the pain of loss). I once proposed myself (within earshot of the Cumaean Sibyl's cave) that the situation and the literary echoes within the first *Eclogue* recommend the poem as a Vergilian response to the prophetic vehemence of *Epode* 16, an extension of the hand of friendship and understanding to its deeply-troubled author. Vergil's Meliboeus, in other words would be Horace himself.<sup>64</sup>

But to summarize, Horace seems to have known and exploited some Biblical themes and imagery in his poetry, Jeremiah, for example, in *Epode* 16. To judge from *Eclogue* 4, Vergil would seem to have been familiar with one or both of Isaiah and *Sibylline Oracle* III. So if Horace incorporated Jeremiah in a carefully-orchestrated prophetic refutation of *Eclogue* 4, what *he* saw (and wanted others to see) in Vergil would have been a sustained allusion to Isaiah's prophecy of a coming divine infant, an imminent reconciliation with God, and all his blessings of peace and plenty on the earth. If that hypothesis is true, the influence of the Jews in Rome and their sacred books upon Rome's two greatest poets is much greater than we have supposed.

Twelve centuries later, another passionate disciple of Vergil, the Florentine Dante Alighieri, reflected on the similarities between the Hebrew Paradise and the Pagan Age of gold in Matilda's speech in his *Purgatorio* (28.130-47). Vergil and Statius are listening (along with the poet):

"Quelli che anticamente poetaro  
l'eta' dell'oro e suo stato felice,  
forse in Parnaso esto loco sognaro.

"Qui fu innocente l'umana radice;  
qui primavera e' sempre, ed ogni frutto;  
nettare e' questo di che ciascun dice."

("Those poets who in ancient times sang the Age  
of Gold and its blissful state, perhaps dreamed  
on Parnassus of this place.

63. Williams (1969), 281-82.

64. Kilpatrick, 103-06.

Here the root of humankind was innocent. Here  
spring is always, and every fruit. This is  
the nectar of which each speaks.”)

Dante concludes his canto with a word of wry caution:

Io mi volsi di retro allora tutto  
a' miei poeti, e vidi che con riso  
udito avevan l'ultimo costruito.

(“Around I turned then to look full at  
my poets—and saw how with a laugh  
had they heard the final fancy.”)

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