

2022

## A Pair of Horatian Odes Translated into English Verse

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### Recommended Citation

Quist, Carl (2022) "A Pair of Horatian Odes Translated into English Verse," *Parnassus: Classical Journal*: Vol. 8, Article 3.

Available at: <https://crossworks.holycross.edu/parnassus-j/vol8/iss1/3>

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Ode I.3

“Propempticon to Vergil on the Occasion of the Poet’s Voyage to Athens”

<p>If thou the pow’rful Cypran Lady should,          If ye will it, thou shining Helen’s twins,          Or thou, winds’ kingly father, command them          Obstruct the others but not Iäpyx.</p>	<p>Sic te diva potens Cypri<sup>1</sup>,          sic fratres Helenae<sup>2</sup>, lucida sidera,          ventorumque regat pater<sup>3</sup>          obstrictis aliis praeter Iäpyga,<sup>4</sup></p>	
<p>Thine, ship, the promise-note of Vergil, friend;          To Attic shores the below’d debt is owed.          Return him dry, unharm’d I pray you, ship;          And preserve thou the half-part of my soul.</p>	<p>navis, quae tibi creditum          debes Vergilium; finibus Atticis          reddas incolumem precor          et serves animae dimidium meae.</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>To him hard oak and triple bronze nail’d round          His heart; for he, the first to commit his          Frail barque ‘gainst angry sea, did not          Once tremble before headlong Africus.</p>	<p>Illi robur et aes triplex          circa pectus erat, qui fragilem truci          commisit pelago ratem          primus, nec timuit praecipitem          Africum</p>	<p>10</p>
<p>Contending ‘gainst the northern Aquilo,          Or gloomy Hyades or Notus’ rage,          than whom no greater master of the deep,          the rage who storms or calms, yet fearless          he.</p>	<p>decertantem Aquilonibus<sup>5</sup>          nec tristis Hyadas<sup>6</sup> nec rabiem Noti,<sup>7</sup>          quo non arbiter Hadriae          maior, tollere seu ponere vult freta.</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>What chance for death feared he, by courage          driv’n,          Whose stone-dry eyes gazed ‘pon deeply          monsters?          Beheld the mutinous deep, spied th’infamed          Epiran Thunder Cliffs, those deathly rocks?</p>	<p>Quem mortis timuit gradum          qui siccis oculis monstra natantia,          qui vidit mare turbidum et          infamis scopulos Acroceraunia?<sup>8</sup></p>	<p>20</p>
<p>In vain the prudent Ocean tore off land          From sea discordant, so impious we          Might not leap over his expanse with rafts          Impious he forbade land-men to touch.</p>	<p>Nequiquam deus abscidit          prudens Oceano dissociabili          terras, si tamen impiae          non tangenda rates transiliunt vada.</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>So reckless they the sum of men, and rash;</p>	<p>Audax omnia perpeti          gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas;</p>	

<sup>1</sup> The goddess Venus, born from the sea near Cyprus, was a patroness of sailors.

<sup>2</sup> Helen’s twin brothers, Castor and Pullox, protected seafarers as well.

<sup>3</sup> Aeolus, usually the master of winds, is here depicted as their father. Aeolus famously appears in *Aeneid* I.52ff.

<sup>4</sup> Iäpyx, a wind, blew from the Northwest, and thus was favorable for those sailing from Brundisium to Graecia.

<sup>5</sup> The North winds.

<sup>6</sup> A set of stars visible in October and November, coinciding with gloomy, rainy weather.

<sup>7</sup> The South wind.

<sup>8</sup> The ‘Thunderbolt Cliffs’ are a mountain ridge near Epirus, known both for treacherous rocks and storms.

They always rush to suffer through their sins. Yes rash the gens of Iäpetus he Whose son's impious fraud to men fire gave.	audax Iapeti <sup>9</sup> genus ignem fraude mala gentibus intulit;	30
For after fire's theft from Olympian house Brought wasting illness and new fevers now On men's lands unclean the horde settled death. They threat'ning firstly slow corruption but	post ignem aetheria domo subductum macies et nova febrium terris incubuit cohors semotique prius tarda necessitas leti corripuit gradum.	35
Death's pace they hasten now insatiable. Renowned, the expert craftsman Daedalus With feathers not to man bestowed took flight, just as through Acheron broke Heracles.	Expertus vacuum Daedalus aëra pinnis non homini datis; perrupit Acheronta <sup>10</sup> Herculeus labor. Nil mortalibus ardui est;	40
To mortals nothing is too arduous; in foolishness we seek the sky itself. For all men's scandals, we will suffer not Jove to lay down his wrathful thunderbolts.	caelum ipsum petimus stultitia neque per nostrum patimur scelus iracunda Iovem ponere fulmina.	

Ode I.4  
"Solvitur Acris Hiems"

Dissolved is bitter ice by welcome spring; Dry winches haul dry hulls as west wind warms; Now the herd from stalls, tiller from his hearth Emerge; the meadow's hoarfrost grey melts green.	Solvitur acris hiems grata vice veris et Favoni <sup>11</sup> , trahuntque siccas machinae carinas, ac neque iam stabulis gaudet pecus aut arator igni, nec prata canis albicant pruinis.	5
Cytheran Venus leads now under moon Her dancing Graces, partner'd Nymphs thrice fair They pound the earth with steps so quick while visits Forg'd Vulcan his bright Cyclopes shaping storms.	Iam Cytherea chorus ducit Venus <sup>12</sup> imminente luna, iunctaeque Nymphis Gratiae decentes alternò terram quatunt pede, dum gravis Cyclopum Vulcanus <sup>13</sup> ardens visit officinas.	1 0
	Nunc decet aut viridi nitidum <sup>14</sup> caput	

<sup>9</sup> Iapetus, the father of Prometheus.

<sup>10</sup> The Acheron, a river of the Underworld, here stands for the Underworld as a whole.

<sup>11</sup> The West wind, better known as Zephyrus, accompanied the arrival of Spring.

<sup>12</sup> The Island of Cythera, in addition to the Island of Cyprus, claimed to be the birthplace of Venus.

<sup>13</sup> The lightning bolts here being forged by Vulcan's Cyclopes will compose the imminent summer storms.

<sup>14</sup> During spring festivals, it was customary to anoint the heads with perfumed oil, wear garlands of myrtle and flowers, and sacrifice to Faunus, the god of shepherds and farmers, to secure bountiful herds and agriculture in the coming year.

And now is meet to crown our brows with green  
New myrtle or with flowers perfum'd which  
Earth unchain'd fruits. In shade-groves Faunus  
bids  
The lamb or goat-kid which to him is due.

Yet Pallid Death with equal fist the hut  
Of paupers or the tow'rs of kings knocks still;  
For, blest dear Sestus, brief life forbids long  
Hope. Soon black night will oppress you, and  
Shades

Will greet at dreary Pluto's gate your soul.  
No more by dice will you be supper's king;  
Nor shall you admire tender Lycidas,  
Who attracts young men and soon virgins  
mild.

impedire myrto  
aut flore, terrae quem ferunt solutae;  
nunc et in umbrosis Fauno decet immolare  
lucis, 1  
seu poscat agna sive malit haedo. 5

Pallida Mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum  
tabernas  
regumque turris. O beate Sesti,  
vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat incohare  
longam. 2  
Iam te premet nox fabulaeque Manes 0

et domus exilis Plutonia, quo simul mearis,  
nec regna vini<sup>15</sup> sortiere talis  
nec tenerum Lycidan mirabere, quo calet  
iuventus  
nunc omnis et mox virgines tepebunt.

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<sup>15</sup> The master of a symposium is chosen by lot; it would be his responsibility to run the party.