Philodemus, Flattery and the Pest: Horace, *Satires* 1.9

One of the most colorful and extended portraits of vicious behavior in the *Satires* begins when Horace introduces the popular character sketch of a garrulous and self-seeking opportunist in 1.9. Originally referred to in English as "the coxcomb" and "the bore," Niall Rudd proposed to rename him "the pest," although for reasons that will soon become obvious I shall call him "the toady." This poem occupies an important, even strategic, position in *Satires* 1, appearing as it does soon after Horace's description of his successful encounter with Maecenas in 1.6. His self-serving account in this satire of how he spoke candidly (60: *quod eram narro*), with reservation (57: *pudor prohibebat plura profari*) and impressed the wealthy patron by virtue (83: *virtutis*), which is itself the product of his upbringing as depicted in 1.4, provides an entertaining yet important contrast with the toady's garrulity and overbearing ambition in 1.9. In effect, Horace presents his audience with an example of the wrong way to attract wealthy patrons, which I argue draws heavily from Philodemus of Gadara's observations, themselves a response to accusations of flattery from Cicero (*Pis*. 70: *adsentatorem*), in two ethical treatises entitled *On Conversation* and *On Flattery*, the latter of which is spread out among many fragments.

Interpreters of *Satires* 1.9 have highlighted the influence of various sources on Horace's hilarious portrait of social "courtship" gone wrong. According to the analyses of Fraenkel (1957), Freudenburg (1993) and Courtney (1994), Horace's incorporation of compositional variation as well as the opening verse "I was on my way by chance" (1: *ibam forte via sacra*) are imitations of Catullus, although similar expressions occur in Lucilius (1142 M: *ibat* [*Scipio*] *forte domum*) and Vergil (*Ecl*. 9.1: *in urbem*). The existence of a Lucilian prototype for this satire is contested by scholars like Rudd (1966) but supported by Ferriss-Hill (2011), who argues that the nameless interlocutor should be identified with Lucilius himself. There are important

connections between Horace's portrayal of toady and the *character dramaticus*, as Musurillo (1964) and Cairns (2005), taking their cue from Porphyrio (*ad* 1: *dramatico charactere*) and perhaps also Plutarch's *How to Tell a Flatterer from a Friend* (4.50e: τραγικός ἐστιν), have demonstrated. As Gowers notes (2012), the presence of comic stereotypes, particularly those in Eupolis' *Flatterers*, Plautus' *Braggart Soldier* and Terence's *Eunuch*, combined with the role of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and Theophrastus' *Characters*, is likewise essential to appreciating the literary texture of *Satires* 1.9.

As Damon (1997), Oliensis (1998) and Kemp (2010) have discussed, in the *Satires* Horace is concerned with addressing criticism regarding his status as the "son of Fortune" (2.6.49: *Fortunae filius*) and defending himself from suspicions of flattery (cf. *S*.1.6.45-48). Philodemus, in the light of Cicero's accusations, was similarly determined to prove his virtuous disposition but in the form of philosophical treatises like *On Flattery*. According to him, the sage client and the flatterer resemble one another to some degree (ἔσονταί τινες ὁμοιότητες), since both are drawn to "wealthy patrons" (ἀνθρώπ[οις] μεγαλοπλούτοις). On the other hand, Philodemus also mentions qualities peculiar to flatterers, many of which appear in *Satires* 1.9: Whereas the sage only speaks the truth (*S*. 1.9.48-51), the flatterer uses "honeyed words" (μει[λίττει] δὲ τὸν κολα[κε]υόμεν[ον]; cf. *S*.1.9.4) and "speaks only to please" (PHerc. 1457, col. 1.9: [ὁ λέγων πρὸ]ς χάριν). The sage knows how to observe the limits of speech (*On Conversation* col. 5.2: [τῆ]ς ὁμιλίας . . . τὸ πέ[ρας]; cf. *S*.1.6.57 above), whereas the flatterer praises everything in sight (πάν[τ]ων [τ]ὴν ἐπιμέλει[α]ν π[ρ]οσποι[εῖσ]θαι . . . καὶ λαλεῖν; cf. *S*.1.9.11-12). The sage client knows himself and is confident in his virtue, while the flatterer imitates victims for the sake of appearing agreeable ([ἄ]λ[λο μὲν γὰρ] τὸ μιμεῖσθαι τ[ιν′, ἕτερον δὲ] τὸ ζηλοῦν; cf. *S*.1.9.21-24). Finally, the sage client is unaffected by envy, whereas

the flatterer is extremely jealous of potential rivals (φθονοῦσι καὶ διαβάλλουσι; cf. *S*.1.9.45-47). Overall, I contend that Philodemus' observations enrich Horace's portrait and provide insight regarding the concerns of honest clients in an age notoriously beset by intrigue and selfishness.