

Gendered and Ethnic Inversions in Horace, *Ode* 1.15 (*Pastor cum traheret*)

This paper re-reads Horace's *carmen* 1.15—Nereus' prophetic warning to Paris—as a meditation on the competing possibilities of allegorical signification. The poem has often been taken as an allegory on the fatal relationship between Antony and Cleopatra (e.g. Sinko, Willi 119-120, Kiessling and Heinze 20-21, Wilkinson 68, Oksala 121; more cautiously Bradshaw 34). As Draper (658) sums up: “Without insisting on a one-to-one correspondence, Horace invites comparison between Antony and Paris.” Yet this interpretation is not without detractors (e.g. Fraenkel 188, Nisbet and Hubbard 189-190, Cairns 451- 452, Schmude, Syndikus 173, Cucchiarelli 47-53). Lowrie (130) seeks to resolve this scholarly impasse by arguing instead that the poem is “about the need for allegory, and the impossibility of pinning meaning down to a single signification.”

This paper reframes the discussion of allegory in *C.* 1.15 by drawing a connection, not between Paris and Antony, but between Paris and Cleopatra. This gender inversion is suggested by Cicero, who links Antony and Helen in the Second Philippic: *ut Helena Troianis, sic iste huic rei publicae causa pestis atque exitii fuit* (55.5). Though predating Antony's relationship with Cleopatra, the simile suggests his effeminacy; likewise, Horace masculinizes Cleopatra in *C.* 1.37 (*nec muliebriter*, 1.37.22). Reading *C.* 1.15 intratextually with *C.* 1.37, a connection between Paris and Cleopatra is also suggested by similes comparing both to “soft” animals (Paris: *cervus...mollis*, 1.15.29-31; Cleopatra: *mollis columbae*, 37.18). Both are paradoxically described as *ferox* (1.15.13; cf. *ferocior*, 1.37.29), but their courage is undermined by behavior that renders them ineffective in war (*inbelli*, 1.15.15; *impotens*, 1.37.10). My reinterpretation resolves a crux in earlier allegorical readings of the poem (Mayer 143): Paris'

actions destroy his own people (*exitium tuae / gentis*, 1.15.20-21), while Antony's devastate Egypt, not Rome. Viewing Paris as a Cleopatra-figure explains this dynamic: both are Easterners whose relationship with a Western outsider leads to the destruction of their dynasties. Building on Lowrie's metapoetic argument, I propose that this poem demonstrates that allegorical alignments can cut both ways and thus destabilizes the simplistic one-to-one correspondences of allegory more generally: Paris may be read as either Antony or Cleopatra, and Troy may be figured as both Rome and Egypt.

Indeed, the gender inversion suggested by aligning Paris with Cleopatra further confounds a simplified reading of Horace's ethnopoetics. Troy as proto-Rome is a frequent presence in the *Odes*, but—as *C.* 3.3 makes clear—the existence of Rome is predicated upon Troy's destruction: Juno declares that she will allow Rome to flourish only if Troy is not rebuilt (3.3.37-68). Roman national identity thus rests both on likeness with and differentiation from Troy (cf. Reed 2007; 2011 on the *Aeneid*). La Bua claims that, in Horace's poetry, the East becomes “the ethical representation of a negative world” (268), but I argue that the triangulation of Egypt, Troy, and Rome in *C.* 1.15 disrupts any simplistic contrast between self and other. Reading Troy as a figure for Egypt in *C.* 1.15 suggests the difficulty of disentangling Horace's Rome from the effeminizing influence of the East: is Rome, with its Eastern origin, really so distinct from her Oriental enemies? I conclude that reconsidering the allegorical alignments of *C.* 1.15 exposes the competing valuations of Rome's Trojan heritage and its meaning in Augustan discourses.

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