

The transformation of the Horatian Sabine farm in Persius' Satire 6

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this article is to focus on the motif of the countryside in Roman satire. In particular, it aspires to study the way the Sabine farm is delineated in Horace's Satire 2.6 and later in his Epistles, in order to elucidate the evolution of this motif in Persius' 6th Satire. In this poem, Persius addresses Caesius Bassus, who retreats to Sabine to seek poetic inspiration, but seems trapped in the paths of earlier poetry and cannot attain bliss, while the poet achieves it in the port of Luna.

KEYWORDS: Sabine farm – epicurean *ataraxia* – satirical *persona* – roman satire – *locus amoenus*.

Introduction-State of the art

The aim of this paper is to focus on the contrast between *rusticitas* and *urbanitas* in Roman satire, by examining the evolution of this motif from Horace's *Satires* and *Epistles* to Persius' 6th Satire, his most Horatian poem.¹

Such a conception is a novel and painstaking endeavor, as the existing literature on the influence of Horatian poetry on Persius' 6th Satire focuses mainly on the intertextual dialogue between the two satirical poets. There is reference to other motifs that Persius adopts from Horace, such as *aurea mediocritas*, prominent in Satire 6. In particular, the *personae* of the miser and the spendthrift are selected to point out the importance of living in moderation and prudence, a key motif in Horace's 1st Satire (1.1). For instance, Hooley (1993), focuses on how Persius uses *aurea mediocritas* in Satire 6 and stresses that the *persona* of the heir echoes the first Horatian satire, wherein the poet considers *avaritia* as one of the major human foibles. In addition, Rudd (2008), argues that the opening verses of Satire 6 are reminiscent of the salutation of an epistle and then outlines the similarities between advice given to Florus by Horace and to Bassus by Persius, stressing their common goal to highlight the need for *recte vivere*. Rudd also analyzes the influence of the Stoic philosophy on Persius.

¹ The translations of the latin texts are my own. I wish to express my gratitude to Gregoria Dama (English language teacher and translator) for her suggestions and her insightful feedback.

Plaza (2006), in turn, focuses on the heir motif, claiming that the 6th Satire can be considered as Persius' most Horatian Satire (Plaza, 2006: 98). A similar view can be found in Freudenburg (2001) and Hooley (2007), without making any reference to the way Persius uses the motif of Sabine farm.

Likewise, Fiske (1913) scrutinizes the intertextual dialogue of Horatian *Ars Poetica* with Persius' 1st Satire. Moreover, Tzounakas (2005), highlights how Lucilius and Horace, predecessors in this genre, influenced Persius' programmatic Satire.

Nevertheless, although the infiltration of the Sabine *locus* in Persius' 6th Satire is not extensively presented in existing literature, the motif of the Sabine farm in Horace's poetry, and in particular in his *Satires* and *Epistles*, is sufficiently outlined in monographs and articles within the last twenty years.

Initially, as far as the philosophical elements of the *Epistles* are concerned, Bowditch (2001) focuses on the 14th and 16th poem of the first book of the collection. She denotes that Horace's reference to the Sabine farm gifted by Maecenas, as well as the presentation of the countryside as the ideal place to attain bliss, are associated with epicurean *ataraxia* and moderation as a lifestyle. At the same time, he highlights the poet's dialogue with both the epicurean philosophy and Vergil's bucolic poems.

Moreover, Armstrong (2004) referring to Horace's selected verses highlights the latter's dialogue with Philodemus' various works. In this way, he comes to the conclusion that the poet's *Epistles* are a philosophical diatribe in verse, with pervading elements of different and often contradictory sources such as the Stoics, Epicurus, Philodemus and Lucretius. Furthermore, according to Armstrong, Horace tends to converse with various different philosophical schools, without embracing dogmatically any of them.²

In effect, Mayer's paper (1986) is an aid to study all the philosophical elements in the first book of the *Epistles*. He identifies Horace with Socrates, the founder of ancient Greek moral philosophy. He also claims that the former treats philosophy and poetry on the whole as a form of constant pursuit of truth and *recte vivere*, just as Socrates constantly sought the ultimate truth. The remarks on the association of the *Epistles* with the epicurean philosophy are also noteworthy in Moles (2009). He focuses on the first three poems of the first book of this collection. Referring to selected verses, he concludes that Horace directly converses with both Epicurus and the Stoics in this work.

Kilpatrick's two monographs are considered actually as a more detailed approach to the *Epistles*, and the starting point for studying Horatian epistolography. The first one (1986), illustrates everything someone should know about each poem of this collection before proceeding to an in-depth study of Horatian epistolography. In particular, the author divides the *Epistles* of the first book according to their addressees (socially superior, contemporary or younger than Horace). In the epilogue, he ends up with the commentary on his *sphragis*, 1.20, in order to raise questions about poetry. According to Kilpatrick (1986: 109), "Horace in his first book of *Epistles* is omnipresent, as a kind, devoted friend. He has abandoned the noisy city in order to fulfill the needs of his innermost nature and achieve *recte*

² For the influence of Philodemus' work respectively on Horatian satire, cf. Yona (2017), who examines the intertextuality of both *Satire* books with Philodemus' works, such as *On Flattery* (*Περί Κολακείας*). Yona claims that Horace turned to Philodemus, precisely because there is a common element between the two of them; that is, their interest in commenting and highlighting the ethical dilemmas that troubled their fellow citizens at the time. The Roman poet eventually succeeds in conveying to the reader Philodemus' most important stances through a variety of Roman *personae*, such as Ofellus, Davus, or Damasippus, and at the same time decries the vices of his era in the context of the satire.

vivere while. Meanwhile, he advises his addressees with selflessness and affection to follow the same path." In addition, he claims that "Horatian *Epistles* constitute a *κτῆμα ἐς ἀεί*, an important poetic contribution to the ideals and practices of friendship."

Similarly, the literature on Horace's Satire 2.6, as well as the *locus* of Sabine in this poem, is extensive and covers the issue sufficiently. Specifically, Oliensis (1998), argues that Horace conceals himself behind both mice, since the counterpart of the countryside is the one that he would like to be. On the other hand, the city mouse represents his *alter ego*, urging him back to the city. After all, according to Oliensis, Sabine farm, Maecenas's gift for his services, is a proof that the poet has not yet consciously chosen the path of a simple rural life, but enjoys the benefits of urban life.

Moreover, Armstrong (2014), highlights in an excellent way the general influence of epicurean philosophy on Horatian satire, using different motifs from both the first and second books of *Satires*. Finally, in West (1974), all symbols of the myth of mice are deciphered. They are treated as two *personae* of the poet himself and Sabine emerges as the ultimate symbol of epicurean *ataraxia*, regarding the poet himself and in a broader sense every human being.

Given the above, it becomes clear that in Persius 6, the role of Sabine farm, a well-known epicurean symbolism in Horatian poetry, albeit prominent has received little attention. First, it is taken for granted that the form of Satire 6 (salutation reminiscent of a letter) as well as its content (including motifs such as: moderation, human *vitia*, exhortatory style, need for *recte vivere*) is the most Horatian of the collection according to pre-existing literature. It is important to highlight how this motif is used in Persius' 6th Satire, and in particular in the first 11 verses of the poem, after going over the role of Sabine in Horace's *Satires* and *Epistles*. In this way, it will be illustrated that Persius converses with Horace while at the same time he keeps his distance from him, as he rebukes the undue imitation of Horatian diction chosen by Bassus, the recipient of his doctrines.

The Sabine farm in Horatian satire 2.6.

A central theme of Satire 2.6 is the poet's tiresome urban lifestyle, compelling him to flee to the countryside to retreat.

The poem advances two different themes. The first one is the contrast between the countryman and the urbanite. Second, the juxtaposition of the Epicurean philosopher, being devoted to his intellectual pursuits and experiencing distress while living in the bustling city (city mouse) with the peasant (country mouse). In verses 1-76, Horace records all the matters bothering him while living in Rome. In particular, not only does he focus on his obligations to Maecenas and the criticism he faces by his friends on account of his friendship with Maecenas, but he also gives emphasis to the hustle and bustle of the city.

Horace feels nostalgic for the serenity of living in the countryside, where he is free from social constraints (verses 59-62). Besides, the conversations with Maecenas sometimes make him frustrated; therefore the author longs for the feasts at the Sabine farm and the simple yet meaningful conversations with his neighbours and servants there (verses 65-67: *o noctes cenaque deum, quibus ipse meique/ante Larem proprium vescor vernasque procacis/Pasco libatis dapibus* // «O nights and

divine dinners/when I and my friends eat beside our own Lar/and feed impolite servants on left-over offerings»³).

The farm stands for simplicity, pure fellowship, and plain, yet excellent food; after all, verse 65 implies that Horace's guests in the countryside are offered a simple but plentiful meal and feel at home, participating in high-minded philosophical conversations (*o noctes cenaequae deum*). In other words, Sabine farm stands for a simple lifestyle, but also encourages serious reflection upon philosophical principles, as opposed to the city. There Horace is overwhelmed by fatigue, obligations, and discussions with Maecenas over tedious issues, such as rivalries and lawsuits.

In the closing section of the poem, verses 77-117, one of the poet's secondary embedded *personae*, the neighbouring farmer Cervius, narrates the fable of the mice. It denotes that liberation from anxieties and fear offers the same bliss, as the one secured by the study of Epicurean philosophy. There is comfort, opulence and plenty of food in the city, but this lifestyle is precarious. On the contrary, in the countryside, people feel free from obligations, and obtain happiness (antithesis between *otium-negotium*, city-countryside).

In the fable of the mice, it is pointed out that the country mouse, invites the city mouse to its house for a meal, but finally, it is persuaded to abandon rural life; as a result, they move to the city, in order to enjoy the pleasures of urban life (verses 90-97):

andem urbanus ad hunc "quid te iuvat" inquit, "amice,	90
prae ruptine moris patientem vivere dorso?	
vis tu homines urbemque feris prae ponere silvis?	
carpe viam, mihi crede, comes, terrestria quando	
mortalis animas vivunt sortita neque ulla est	
aut magno aut parvo leti fuga: quo, bone, circa,	95
dum licet, in rebus iucundis vive beatus,	
vive memor, quam sis aevi brevis."	

At last the town mouse asks him: 'What is satisfying you, my friend, in barely surviving, in this glade on a steep ridge? Wouldn't you prefer the crowded city to these wild woods? Come with me, confide in me, my fellow. Since all terrestrial creatures Are mortal, and there's no escape from death for great men Or small, then live happily, my dear friend, while you are Surrounded by joyful things: live and remember How brief life is.'

Unfortunately, once in the city, they are attacked by dogs, so the country mouse flees and returns to the country (verses 115-117: "*haud mihi vita/est opus hac" ait et "valeas: me silva cavosque/tutus ab insidiis tenuis olabitur ervo" // «This life's no sense for me: and so, farewell: my forest and my hole, and simple vetch, safe from such entrapments, they'll do for me»*). What is implied in this case is the difference between the city mouse, which is not only self-indulgent and obsessed with material pleasures, but also satisfied with living a hedonistic yet dangerous life, as compared to its rustic kin. The latter pursues frugality, while it tries to attain epicurean *ataraxia*. The dogs stand for all the

³ cf. Armstrong 2014: 97 for further details.

dangers of the city, as well as the hosts of rich feasts, who destroy these gatherings with their hypocrisy (Plaza, 2006: 213). By using this particular fable, Horace's intention is to reinforce his claim about the superiority of the frugal lifestyle in the country, described by him as blessed life (*vita beata*) over the luxurious but volatile life in the city. Moreover, the fable of the mice- with its dramatic narrative and lucid imagery besides its philosophical implications- fosters vividness and variety in the Satire, thus making the story readily appealing to all readers (Schoder, 1944: 113).

Nevertheless, the myth should not be considered an outright condemnation of urban life nor a praise of rural lifestyle. The poet defends the superiority of living in the countryside. However, the 'tempting' luxury of the city seduces him as implied in 2.7.28-32:

Romae rus optas; absentem rusticus urbem
tollis ad astra levis. Si nusquam es forte vocatus
ad cenam, laudas securum holus ac, velutis quam
vinctus eas, ita te felicem dicis amasque,
quod nusquam tibi sit potandum.

In Rome you crave for the fields:
In the countryside, wavering, you laud the town to the skies.
If by chance you're not asked out to dinner, you praise
Cabbage peacefully, call yourself happy and congratulate yourself
on not partying, as if you'd have to be forced to go for drinking.

In my opinion, the fable alludes to Horace, since this Satire tends to show that it is not easy for the epicurean poet to refrain from the urban lifestyle, in spite of inclining towards the morality of the countryside. The city mouse can also be perceived as an aspect of Horace's *persona*. He lives in Rome, without being able to resist the material pleasures and the company of his patron Maecenas. On the other hand, the country mouse is a more passive and slothful aspect of his *persona*.

Sabine as *locus* of epicurean *ataraxia* in Epistles 1.10 and 1.14.

From my point of view, the motif of the countryside in Horace's most representative Satire (2.6) presents the philosophical dimension of *urbanitas* and *rusticitas* in Horatian poetry more than any other poem of this collection. Therefore, it is worth focusing our attention on the way that the contrast between town and countryside acquires an entirely different dimension in the *Epistles* when compared with the *Satires*, as the country becomes a unanimous symbol of attaining epicurean *ataraxia*.

In particular, in Epistle 1.10 the ideal *amicitia* is associated with the country (*rus*). The addressee of 1.10 is Aristius Fuscus-already familiar from Satire 1.9. In 1.9, Horace finds his *nemesis* in the city in the annoying verbose pest, who constantly follows the poet. The vain attempts of the poet's *persona* to get rid of his undesired company generally amuse the reader. This encounter and the poet's attempt to get rid of his irksome interlocutor is depicted in an endless and unplanned wandering through the streets of Rome, resulting in looking on a journey to an unknown destination.

Aristius Fuscus, one of Horace's friends, appearing in verse 60, refuses to save him from the poet's follower. Later on, his adversary appears and the poet accepts to be called as a witness in favor of him, so his follower is left alone. In other words, in 1.9 the pest reflects the Hellenistic type of

amicus, using flattery as a means to gain the favor of one of his superiors, in order to obtain glory, wealth or even a free meal. In other words, he tries to accede to Maecenas' circle, taking advantage of his friendship with Horace. However, the poet reacts, and with his persistent refusal to introduce him to his patron, he courageously confronts his denouncers who reprimand him that he is in this circle on purpose. In return, Horace may obtain from him material goods (money, a farm in Sabine) as all philosophers do, but he is not a flatterer who gives advice with dissimulative motives.

Going one step further, in verses 1-5 of 1.10, Horace uses examples from the animal world (verse 5: *pariter, uetuli notique columbi* // «like a couple of old familiar doves»), proving that true friendship can only exist in the country.⁴

It is possible that Fuscus is thinking of building a house in the city (verse 13: *ponendaeque domo quaerenda est area primum* // «And first we should choose a site to build a house»); consequently, Horace seizes the opportunity to extol the *divina natura* of the countryside that surpasses urban routine (verse 15: *novistine locum potiore rure beato?* // «Do you know a better place than the blissful countryside?»). Two prominent contrasts run throughout the poem. The first is the distinction between city and country and the second one between the two friends. Thus, he highlights the need for *aurea mediocritas*. The metaphor of the doves stresses the difference between the two characters (verse 6: *Tunidum servas* // «you guard the nest»). They may love each other, yet they have completely different inclinations (verse 1: *Urbis amatorem Fuscum salvere iubemus ruris amatores* // «To Fuscus the city-lover, I, the country-lover, Send greetings»). The first one constantly travels (Horace), while the other stays at home, as it prefers city life (Fuscus). Horace, blissful as a king, leaves the nest of the city, abandons his responsibilities and flees like a runaway slave (verses 8-11):⁵

Vivo et regno, simul istare liqui
 quae vos ad caelum fertis rumore secundo,
 utque sacerdotis fugit iuus libare cuso, 10
 pane ege o iam mellitis potiore placentis.

I live and I reign, as soon as I've left behind
 What you acclaim to the skies with shouts of joy,
 Seeing I hate sweet wafers like a priest's runaway
 Slave: for it's bread I want now, not honeyed cakes.

He leaves behind the glory and the opulence of the city and seeks the freedom of the countryside (verse 6: *ego laudo ruris amoeni* // «I praise the lovely countryside»), as he thinks that it is intertwined with the attainment of equanimity (verses 1-11). In addition, in verses 15-21, it is evident that the country emerges as the proper place of residence where the runaway Horace managed to find the most suitable "nest" for him:

Est ubi plus tepeant hiemes, ubi gratior aura 15
 leniat et rabiem Canis et momenta Leonis,
 cum semel accepit Solem furibundus acutum?
 Est ubi di vellat somnos minus invida cura?

⁴ For an elaborative study on the *exempla* that the poet chooses in these verses, cf. Mayer 1994, Harrison 2007 and Kilpatrick 1986.

⁵ cf. Macleod 1979: 24. See also Ferri 2007 and Mayer 1994 for further details.

Deterius Libycis olet aut nitet herba lapillis?
 Purior in vicis aqua tendit rumpere plumbum 20
 quam quae per pronum trepidat cum murmure rivum?.

Where are the winters milder? Where does a more welcome
 Breeze temper the Dog-Star's fury and the Lion's charge.
 When maddened he's felt the Sun's piercing darts?
 Where does Care's envy trouble our slumber less?
 Is grass poorer in fragrance or beauty than Libyan stone?

Consequently, the country becomes an emblem of what everyone should seek individually in order to live with contentment. On the other hand, in *Satires*, the countryside is mainly a *locus* of writing poetry (2.6.16-17: *ergo ubi me in montes et in arcem ex urbere movi, quid prius inlustrem saturis musaque pedestri?* // «Now that I've left town, then, for my castle in the mountain, What better matter for satire, and my prosaic Muse?») and living a simple life (2.6.61-62: *o rus, quando ego te adspiciam quandoque licebit nunc veterum libris, nunc somno et inertibus horis ducere sollicitae iucunda obliviae vitae?* // «O my farm, when shall I see you? When will I be free to breathe the joyful forgetfulness of life's cares, among ancient classics now, with sleep and idle hours?»), as opposed to the noisy and dangerous city. The poet simply aspires to achieve *recte vivere* (1.10.44-45: *Laetus sorte tua vives sapienter, Aristi, nec me dimittes in castigatum* // «You'll live wisely, Aristius, if you're satisfied with your fate, and won't let me go unpunished»⁶).

Finally, in verses 39-50, Horace declares his philosophical victory near the temple of *Vacuna*, having become victorious and independent after escaping from the greats of the city; therefore, he is well disposed (verse 50: *laetus*) in the countryside, just as Fuscus should also be. The poet is really interested in the happiness of his intimate friend and counsels him with selfless love (verse 50: *excepto quod non simul esses cetera laetus* // «Crumbling shrine, happy, except that you're not with me too»).

According to Mcleod (1979: 26), “*amicitia* is genuinely identified both with the country, since true friendship can flourish there as well as with happiness (epicurean element). The latter is not only relevant to the fulfilment of our needs, it is also a matter of enjoying the company of our friends, no matter if they are close to us or not. Friendship is also an essential complement to freedom and the core ideal, salient in the *Epistles*. It is directly related to our interaction with others, but at the same time our independence from them when we aspire to be winners –runaways-like Horace-and not just kings.” For this reason, everyone, and therefore Fuscus as well, should not be seduced by wealth accumulation, but try to achieve his victory over exaggeration and delights, choosing the moderation of the country, where *amicitia* may flourish. On the contrary, the hectic pace of city life, full of duties and obligations, does not permit anyone to enjoy the company of good friends, taken for granted that it is connected with the anxiety everyone feels about his daily *curae*.

The motif of the countryside acquires a new dimension after scrutinising Epistle 1.14. It is addressed to a bailiff. *Vilicus* is the foreman of slaves (usually a slave himself), socially inferior to Horace. The poet writes the Epistle from the city, while *vilicus* is in the countryside. Horace has gone to Rome to assist one of his friends, but he feels unhappy there and wishes to retreat to his beloved

⁶ For the motif of the countryside in Horatian satire, cf. also Harrison (2007), Muecke (1993), Oliensis (1998).

country.⁷ On the contrary, his addressee is bored in the countryside and feels nostalgia for the city. From Horace's point of view, his friend has not made an informed decision to return to Rome, because he is not young anymore (verse. 44: *quam scit uterque, libens, censebo, exerceat Artem/I'd advise each to practise, freely, the skill he knows*). At the same time, city life is full of hardships for a slave, hard work and discipline without special privileges (verses 31-44). In the afore mentioned verses, the poet also presents the example of the horse of the city and the ox of the country, which envy each other's life (*Optat ephippia bos piger, optat arare caballus/The lazy ox longs for the bridles, the horse longs to plough.*)⁸ Likewise, if the slave changes his life, he will soon long for his former lifestyle. Horace uses the term *libens* with a moral overtone,⁹ since freedom is the key to happiness, as everyone is free in the countryside to enjoy everything he does.

In this poem, there is an effort to explain the new dimension that the Sabine farm acquires both as a place of producing goods and a source of *otium*.¹⁰ The social status of the two men is not the same, as Horace is politically free, while the addressee is a foreman of slaves wishing to return to his former condition (slave in the city). Nevertheless, both of them are equal if we consider the fact that they are potential "patients" in need of the healing effect of philosophy (Bowditch, 2001: 222); nonetheless, each one longs for different things, notably those that run against their social status: Horace is not happy in the city and wishes to return to the countryside, while *vilicus* longs for the city.

The poet suffers when he is far from his Sabine farm, a place identified with himself, and therefore his return to Rome is tantamount to losing himself (Bowditch 2001: 223).¹¹ Consequently, he writes this epistle to fill the void of this separation and he describes Sabine as the place where he is occupied with philosophy and acquires *aequus animus*. On the contrary, he suffers now because he is in the city and needs "treatment."

The Sabine villa is transmuted in his soul into a *locus amoenus*, a rhetorical *expression* (*ecphrasis*) of a *locus* associated with pleasant feelings for each person.¹² In the countryside, Horace

⁷ For a further study on Epistle 1.14, cf. also (Guthrie 1951: 116), as well as Schmidt (1997: 155-163).

⁸ This *exemplum* is related to the previous one about the mouse of the city and the countryside in Satire 2.6. cf. also Muecke (1993), Mayer (1994), Harrison (2007), Oliensis (1998).

⁹ cf. *Od.* 3.4.29 (*Ut cumque mecum vos eritis, libens insanientem navita // «Whenever you are with me, as a sailor, free in your insanity»*), *Sat.* 1.1.63 (*iubeas miserum esse, libenter quatenus id facit // «Let those people be sad, since that's what they wish»*), 1.3.141-42 (*inque vice millorum patiar delicta libenter // «Gladly in turn all their shortcomings, and I'll live, a private man, more happily than your majesty»*), *Epist.* 1.11.24 (*utquocumque loco fueris vixisse libenter te dicas // «wherever you've lived, you can say you were happy»*). *Libens* may seem more intense than *aequo animo*; cf. *Cic.Att.* 10.4.6: *aequo animo, immo vero etiam gaudenti et libenti // «with a peaceful soul, even blissful and free»*.

¹⁰ For a comparison between this Epistle, the bucolic poetry of Virgil and Theocritus, cf. Bowditch (2001: 211-220).

¹¹ For Sabine farm as a philosophical symbol, cf. also Schmidt (1997: 51-54), who examines this motif in all the Horatian poetic collections, from *Satires* and *Odes* to his *Epistles*.

¹² The word *amoenus* cannot be found in Virgil's *Eclagues*, but in Horace's Ode 1.17 it is used in a bucolic context, taken for granted that the poet chooses this word to describe the mountain Lucretile, which was next to Horace's Sabine farm. Moreover, it is a symbol of Faunus' magic spell on the poet every time he runs away from Lycaeon, in order to stay with Horace (verses 1-4): *Velox amoenum saepe Lucretilem / mutat Lycaeo Faunus et igneam / defendit aestatem capellis usque meis pluviosque ventos // «Swift Faunus, the god, will quite often exchange Arcady for my sweet Mount Lucretile, and while he stays he protects my goats from the heat and the driving rain»*. In *Aeneid*, Virgil uses the word *amoenus*, to describe the nature in spring; more precisely, in verse 5.734 (*sed amoena piorum concilia Elysiumque colo: // «I live in Elysium, and the lovely gatherings of the blessed»*) and 6.638-39 (*amoena vir ecta fortunatorum nemorum sedesque beatas: // «the man that came to the pleasant locations, the delightful grassy turf of the Fortunate Groves, and the homes of the blessed»*), he refers to Elysium Campus, a symbol of the ultimate idyllic scenery, connected to the poetic inspiration, while in verse 8.31 (*huic deus ipse loci fluvio Tiberinus amoeno: // «Tiberinus himself, the god of the place,*

also leaves the *negotia* and *officia* associated with Rome; this *urbs*, apart from leading the poet to a loss of *ataraxia*, is also reminiscent of his lyric poetry, as it represents his preoccupation with politics in his *Odes* (*negotium*).

In addition, Sabine is a *locus amoenus* where the poet attains *otium*, during a feast with his neighbours. He is away from the envy of the city dwellers and feels serene. On the contrary, the bailiff in the countryside is beset with duties and obligations, so he prefers the city to indulge to sensual pleasures (*voluptas*). The contrast between the two men is evident; *vilicus* is a slave and toils over fields (agriculture), but also longs for material pleasures. Horace abstains from them, feeling happy being occupied with philosophy. His role is to teach moral philosophy to his friend and persuade him to draw his attention on agriculture, so that Horace can live peacefully and carefree in the countryside. If the bailiff does not produce fruit and material goods (*fructus*), Sabine will not be *locus amoenus* for the poet. In other words, the presence of *vilicus* in the countryside is essential for the transformation of the place into the perfect *locus amoenus* for Horace in order to write poetry. The bailiff does not enjoy the *fructi* of this *locus*; on the contrary, I believe that his labor ensures *aequus animus* for Horace.

Thus, Horace's independence depends on bailiff's work in the farm in order to obtain the necessary material possessions for survival, as well as on Maecenas's generosity to offer it as a gift to him, explaining why the poet will always be grateful to him. Sabine has helped Horace become independent from the circle of his patron. Moreover, the bailiff is the poet's *alter ego* (Bowditch, 2001: 234),¹³ since he reflects the freedman's social status; Horace is a freedman too; if his father had not provided him with the proper education and Maecenas had not included him in his circle, he would not have attained *otium*, but he would probably live like his bailiff. He could not be independent and travel from town to the country whenever he wished, but he would be obliged to do so whenever he had to follow his master's orders.

In conclusion, the motif of the country is predominant in Horace's *Epistles*, since he writes from the countryside, he reluctantly goes to the city and describes the natural beauties and the benefits that Sabine offers. But as compared to *Satires*, it seems different, because in the first poetic collection it is depicted as the ideal place for composing poetry—as opposed to the noisy and tiresome city—while in the second one it emerges as a shelter that enables the poet to create an idyllic bucolic setting for his poems (Mayer 1994: 47). In his earlier works, there is an epicurean context when comparing city life with that of the countryside (especially in Satire 2.6 in the fable of the mice). However, it should also be considered as individual, as the poet focuses primarily on himself. On the contrary, in *Epistles*, the country does not promote the poet's poetic composition, but is a source of deeper ethical concerns,

{appeared to} him, rising from his lovely stream») and 9.680-81 (*sive Padi ripis Athesim seu propter amoenum consurgunt geminae quercus in caelo: // «just as twin oaks rise up into the sky, either on the banks of the Po, or by delightful Athesis»*), the word is used for Tiberis, symbol of the pure Italian nature before war. Furthermore, Lucretius relates the word *amoenus* to Helicon, as a symbol of poetic inspiration (*DRN*, 1.117-19: *Ennius ut noster cecinit, qui primus amoeno // «detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam, / per gentis Italas hominum quae clara clueret/ as our Ennius sang, he first brought back from Helicon an eternal wreath of leaves—its fame is spoken of by families of men in Italy»*). Likewise, Alpers 1996 discusses in detail the motif of *locus amoenus* in Virgil's *Eclogues* and claims that pastoral's *locus amoenus* permits to those who enter it the opportunity to forge beneficial friendships considered off-limits in daily life. Beginning with Theocritus and Virgil, he argues that pastoral is a way for the herdsmen to reveal the kinds of power human beings can exercise in relation to their respective worlds.

¹³ cf. also Kilpatrick (1986), Harrison (2007), Mayer (1994), Johnson (2010), as well as Moles (2009) for further details concerning bailiff's role in this Epistle.

related to philosophy, and emerges as an emblem of true friendship and independence from commitments (*curae*), malice and urban duties (*negotia*). It is a timeless symbol that does not only pertain to the creator's individual-poetic well-being, but also has to do with everyone who intends to live happily.

The motif of the countryside in Persius' Satire 6.

In Satire 6, Persius refers to the proper use of material goods. It is reminiscent of Horace's *Epistles*,¹⁴ as it begins with addressing a friend and corresponding references to the addressee's place of residence (verse 1: *Sabino*) and the sender (verse 6: *Ligus ora-The Ligurian coast* and 9: *Lunai portum-port of Luna*)- a key element in epistolography.

More specifically, Caesius Bassus (79 AD) is the addressee of the Epistle, one of Persius' intimate friends and a poet of lyric love poetry, whose work has unfortunately not been saved. He may have been one of Horace's disciples, although, according to Rudd (2008: 378.), he could not belong to the *servum pecus* of Epistle 1.19.19 (*O imitatores, servum pecus: o Imitators, slavish herd*). As Quintilian claims (*Instituto oratoria*: 10.1.96: *Si quem adicere velis, is erit Caesius Bassus, quem nuper vidimus; sed eum longe praecedunt ingenia viventium // «if you want to add somebody, this will be Caesius Bassus, whom we have discovered recently; however, the genius men alive have surpassed him for a long time»*), he was the only notable continuator of the lyric poetry of Horace's *Odes*.¹⁵

He is also identified with the author of a treatise entitled *De Metris*, whose considerable fragments, probably of an abbreviated edition, are extant (ed. Keil, 1885). The work was probably originally in verse, and was later on epitomized in prose in order to be used as an instruction book. An account of some of the metres of Horace (in Keil, *Grammatici Latini*, vi. 305), bearing the title *Ars Caesii Bassi de Metris*, is not composed by him, but chiefly borrowed by its unknown author, from the treatise mentioned above.¹⁶

From verse 1, the use of the word *Sabino*, reveals the addressee's place of residence. He has also retreated to the countryside in mature age, as Horace did; according to Rudd (2008: 378.) he is 31 years old, while Persius is just 17.

In verses 2-6, the poet, with a direct style, appropriate to a friendly letter, praises his addressee for his vigorous style and his strong verse, regarded as more suitable for young poets rather than those at an old age. In addition, in my opinion, the use of the phrase *pectrine tetrico* in combination with *lyra* in verse 2 (*amne lyra et tetrico uiuunt tibi pectine chordae // «Are the lyre strings alive to your harsh plectrum»*), implies that he composes lyric metres in a serious way, just as Horace did in his

¹⁴ As Hooley (1993: 137) claims, Satire 6 has many intertextual connections with the Horatian Epistle 2.2, which is addressed to Florus, as they both present the necessity of man to distinguish the difference between living a modest lifestyle from being avaricious. Besides, he states that Epistle 1.5, which is addressed to Torquatus, has also many similarities, due to the fact that Horace invites his friend in this poem to his house for a glass of wine, by reminding him the importance of using material goods properly, an argument also found in Persius Satire 6.

¹⁵ According to Conington 1893: 122, he was deputed by Cornutus to edit Persius' *Satires* after his death and should not be identified with Gavius Bassus, who wrote works on the origin and signification of words, as well as on the ancient gods.

¹⁶ Unfortunately, no information can be found about his works, except for the one mentioned above in Quintilian.

Odes, since this particular poetic collection includes a variety of themes, such as love, countryside, nature, friendship, sometimes giving them a philosophical (1.11: *carpe diem-seize the day*) or political overtone (fourth book of *Odes*). It is likely that by using the word *tetricus* he also allures to the archaic forms that Bassus includes in his verses.

Moreover, by using the words *veterum primordia*, he probably refers to *Mons Tetricus* of Sabine.¹⁷ Therefore, in my opinion, Persius once more promotes Sabine as a symbol of isolation for poetry composition, away from the *curae* and anxieties of everyday life in the city. Apart from lyric poetry, Bassus may also be dealing with satire, an element apparent in verses 5-6, since the word *iocos* refers to the playful style of the satire, while the use of the word *honesta* implies that despite his advanced age, he writes -with youthful vivacity- verses that contain jokes about young people, but also have a serious tone (*mox iuuenes agitare iocos et police honesto egregius lusisse senex: At hardly rousing youthful jests // «With your upright thumb/Being magnificent in your senility»*).

Then, in verses 6-13, there is a turn from the addressee to the sender, in an attempt to highlight the contrast between the environment in which Bassus lives and composes his work and the *locus* where Persius lives (verse 6: *mih*).¹⁸ *Ligus ora* departs from the pattern of the *locus* of Sabine as a symbol of Horatian poetic inspiration;¹⁹ it is Persius' winter seaside shelter. Furthermore, verse 9 (*Lunai portum, est operae, cognoscite, ciues // «Get to know the port of Luna, citizens, it's worth it»*),²⁰ also highlights the intertextual dialogue of the poem with Ennius, as it appears exactly in the same form in his *Annales* (fr. 16 Vahlen: *Lunai portum, est operae, cognoscite, cives*).²¹

After all, in verses 9-11, Persius imitates Ennius' style and refers to Homer's reincarnation in the body of his predecessor in verse 11,²² through the image of Pythagoras' peacock (verses 10-11: *coriubet hoc Enni, postquam destertuit esse/Maeonides Quintus pavone ex Pythagoreo // «That's Ennius' desire from the heart/ after dreaming himself to be Homer/descended from a Pythagorean peacock»*). In my point of view, the poet intends to emphasize that he himself also lives in Horace's shadow, as a typical imitator of his poetry, just as Ennius followed Homer's footsteps in his work *Annales*. He also emphasizes his own poetic independence in the Luna (verse 12: *hic ego secures uolgi et quid praeparet auster infelix pecori // «Here I live, untroubled by the mob and by whatever the hostile Southerlies plans for cattle»*), which Bassus is derived of in Sabine, as he follows the lyrical path of Horatian *Odes* (Hooley, 1993: 144).

In addition, the reference to Ennius' *Annales* indicates that Persius, like Ennius, is in *Luna*, composing satires too. However, his own *Saturae* comprise a colloquial poetic form, unlike the ones by Ennius which echo the Homeric way of writing. Therefore, Bassus may wish to follow Horace's lyric poetry, but Persius with his 6th Satire converses with Horace and continues his *Satires* and *Epistles*. He adapts it to his own writing and converts the imitation into a polyphony that negates the initial impression given in verse 1. In other words, Persius uses Horace to give emphasis on the

¹⁷ cf. Rudd (2008: 378). See also Reckford (2009: 136).

¹⁸ The *Scholia* mention that Persius' mother married a second time in Liguria, so he would naturally reside there.

¹⁹ cf. Tac.*Hist.*2.13: *femina Ligus*.

²⁰ Luna is a port on the banks of the river Macra, 10 kilometres from La Spezia. cf. also Reckford (2009: 137) for further details.

²¹ See also Rudd (2008: 379) for further details on the intertextual dialogue of line 9 with the *Annales*.

²² Ennius used to say that he had three hearts, because he understood Greek, Latin, and Oscan. The heart was often used as a symbol of the seat of the understanding; cf. Cic.*Tusc.*I.9, where Ennius is quoted as using the word *cordatus* for wise.

wisdom of his predecessor. Moreover, he points out his distance from the reprehensible imitation of Horatian writing by Bassus, and obviously other young and ambitious poets of his time.

Conclusions

In sum, by examining the *locus* of Sabine in Roman poetry, it becomes evident that it is viewed from different perspectives, depending on the author or genre. In Horace's *Satires*, and especially in 2.6, Horace's affection for the Sabine farm is depicted, as a *locus* of simplicity and friendly associations, far from the *curae* and stress of urban life. The poet chooses the aforementioned farm, one of Maecenas' gifts, as a symbol of a peaceful and tranquil lifestyle for himself. Although being young and ambitious, he finds his retreat in Sabine in order to deal with his *otium*-the composition of poetry.

On the contrary, in his *Epistles* Sabine acquires a more complete dimension, since it is identified with his concern with philosophy, a genre more appropriate to mature age. It also promotes life in the countryside as an indispensable prerequisite for attaining epicurean *ataraxia* and is a source of deeper ethical concerns. Therefore, it is transformed into a universal symbol, that does not only pertain to the poet's individual-poetic well-being but has to do with every person trying to live happily.

The *locus* of Sabine farm acquires another dimension in Persius' 6th Satire. Bassus, a successor of the Horatian lyric poetry, retreats to Sabine to seek poetic inspiration. He intends to compose lyric poems at a mature age, an element that Horace renounces in his *Epistles*, as he considers that as a literary genre it is appropriate for youth because it requires mental clarity (1.1.6: *mens*). However, it seems that Sabine farm in Persius is not related to poetic independence, as it applies to Horatian poetry, since Bassus ends up being Horace's typical imitator, having lost his poetic identity. He is an *opifex* and *egregiens senex*, without leaving his personal mark on Roman poetry.

On the contrary, Persius-like Ennius- is liberated artistically in *Ligus ora*, near the sea and continues his Horatian satire and epistolography, bearing his own personal stamp. He is akin to Horace but also takes his distance from him, as he will be original and differentiate himself from his predecessor.

Therefore, he reverses the *locus* of Sabine and does not identify it with the *otium* or the independence from lyric poetry and Maecenas' desires, as Horace does. In contrast, Bassus appears trapped in the paths of earlier poetry in Sabine and he cannot attain *bliss* proclaimed by Horace in his *Epistles*, while Persius seems to achieve it in his own way in the port of Luna.

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