

Hello everyone, my name is Ruth, and I am a senior here at Mary Washington. Today, I will be presenting my senior thesis project: *Carpe Diem and Consolation: Horace's Imitation and Manipulation of Greek Lyric Models*. The goal of my senior project was to study the influence of Greek lyric on Horace's *carpe diem* poems. For those who are unfamiliar with Horace's *carpe diems*, they are mainly about death and how man should deal with the reality that he would one day die. They included three main components, a descriptive component, which is usually a scene of nature, an insight which the scene of nature provided, and an injunction or how man should react to the reality that he would one day die. For my project, I focused on the Lesbian poets, Sappho and Alcaeus, so called because they were from the island of Lesbos. I focused on these two poets because Horace's persona saw himself as a product of the Lesbian lyric tradition. In *Carm. 2.13*, Horace's persona describes a near death encounter with a tree. He imagines going down to the Underworld and seeing Alcaeus and Sappho sing. By doing so, Horace aligns himself with the Lesbian poets and, and thus according to Gregson Davis' work *Polyhymnia*, claims his own work, the Odes, "ought to be venerated on a par with those giants of Lesbian lyric, Sappho and Alcaeus." Before we begin, I wanted to create a quick warning. Throughout this speech, I will be referring to Sappho, Alcaeus, and Horace as saying, thinking, or writing things in their poetry. However, it would be a mistake for the reader to assume what the poet wrote in their poetry constituted what the poets themselves thought. For example, Horace often wrote about a fear of death; however, we should not assume that he himself feared death and that this poetry naturally reflects the thoughts and feelings of the poet himself. Normally in classics we refer to this as a persona; we'll say that Horace's persona wrote about a fear of death; however, that would be clunky for this speech so I'll be referring to them as Sappho, Alcaeus, and Horace. However, you should not assume that the poets themselves naturally believed what their poetry said. There is a disconnect between a poet and his poetry. With that said, I wanted to highlight some of the similarities and differences between Horace and his Greek lyric influences. Horace imitated the Greek lyric poets in meters, themes, and structure. 11/15 of the *carpe diem* poems used Greek lyric meters. 2 used Sapphic strophe named after Sappho, 6 used Alcaic strophe, named after Alcaeus, and the rest used other lyrics dating back to the Archaic period when Greek lyric was being written, but they were not Sapphic or Alcaic strophe. Horace also wrote on similar themes. Both Sappho and Horace wrote about death and the negative effects it would have on man. In Sappho 58, she describes how she is no longer about to act or dance with the young girls because her knees are weakened, her hair is becoming white, and she is growing older. Horace also describes death negatively, namely through his depictions of the Underworld. For example, in *Carmen 1.28*, he says, "Dant alios Furiae torvo spectacula Marti; exitio est avidum mare nautis; mixta senum ac iuvenum densentur funera; nullum saeva caput Proserpina fugit. The show of the Furies gives them to fierce Mars; The sea is greedy for the destruction of sailors; The mixed corpses of old men and youths are packed together; Cruel Proserpina avoids no head." Through these depictions, you can see that the Greek lyric poets all wrote personas who feared death. The poets also shared a similar structure that was based on an earlier Greek poet, Archilochus. Archilochus preceded both Horace and the Greek lyric poets. He wrote poems that had expressions of *vicissitudo* or alternations in order to represent the larger human expression, which is change and decay. In fragment 67, he describes these alternations, saying, "My heart, my heart, confounded by woes beyond remedy, rise up(?) and defend yourself, setting your breast against your foes(?) as they

lie in ambush(?) and standing steadfastly near the enemy. Do not exult openly in victory and in defeat do not fall down lamenting at home, but let your rejoicing in joyful times and your grief in bad times be moderate. Know what sort of pattern governs mankind." And that translation is from the Loeb. In this poem, Archilochus is describing the natural alternations of war which are victory and defeat. He warns his reader not to be too happy in victory or too sad in defeat. These alternations of victory and defeat represent a larger human experience. Just as in war you have good times and bad times so you do in life. The moral of this lesson is know what sort of pattern governs mankind. Knowing that things can be good or bad and alternation and change should stir man to moderate his emotions to not be too happy in good times or too sad in bad. Knowledge of life's limitations also leads to celebration of the symposium, or the Greek drinking party. In fragment 130, Archilochus says, "for I shall cure nothing by weeping nor shall I make matters worse by pursuit of pleasures and festivities." That is also from the Loeb. So through the symposium, man is able to lighten some of the difficulties of life that come from changing circumstances. This theme was picked up by the Greek lyric poet Alcaeus. He often used scenes of nature as his examples of alternations. For example, fragment 286 connects alternations of winter and spring with death. Although the ending is not available anymore since the lines have been lost it is not impossible to imagine that he connected the alternations of winter and spring with the reality of death, like he does in other poems such as 338. In this poem, um 38, Alcaeus also includes an injunction to celebrate the symposium. "Drink and get drunk, Melanippus, with me. Why do you suppose that when you have crossed the great river of eddying (?) Acheron [meaning the underworld] you will see again the sun's pure light? Come, do not aim at great things." Like Archilochus, awareness of life's changes and alternations lead him to encourage his reader and those he is speaking to in the poem, Melannipus, to participate in the symposium and drink wine in order to lighten his cares. Horace also picks up this theme, and I will show this primarily through Horace Carmen 1.9 which is a direct paraphrase of one of Alcaeus' poems fragment 338. The first two stanzas are directly paraphrase from Alcaeus 338. Horace says, "Vides ut alta stet nive candidum Soracte, nec iam sustineant onus silvae laborantes, geluque flumina constiterint acuto? dissolve frigus ligna super focus large reponens atque benignius deprome quadrimum Sabina, o Thaliarche, merum diota." This translates to "Do you see how Soracte stands white with piled up snow, and the trees working do not now hold back the burden, and rivers remain fixed with sharp frost? Melt the cold placing wood above the bountiful fireplace and more generously let down the pure four year old Sabine wine from the jar O Thaliarchus." In this poem, Horace shows the alternations of life, the change of winter into spring. Since man is subject to life's vicissitude or changes, he should drink wine while he can, which is shown through "atque benignius deprome quadrimum Sabina, o Thaliarche, merum diota.". The changes of winter into spring also represent the limitations of man's life. While the seasons can change from winter to spring to summer to autumn and renew themselves continually, man is subject to a limited lifespan. Through this imagery, although it is not explicitly stated, Horace's readers would have been made aware of their own limitations, that they, unlike nature, could not renew themselves. However, 1.9 also shows Horace's differences from Alcaeus. Horace also created unique qualities; he didn't just copy Greek lyric but he also added Roman elements. For example, Mt. Soracte is located in Italy, not Greece, and he specifies the wine as Sabine which is incredibly good very old Italian wine. Horace also provides specifically Roman advice on how man should

respond to the knowledge that life is limited. Although the Greek lyric also encouraged pursuing love as Horace does here, saying “nec dulcis amores sperne puer neque tu choreas, donec virenti canities abest morosa as a boy reject neither sweet loves nor dances, as long as capricious white hair is absent from green youth.” So although the Greek lyric also encouraged the pursuit of love, Horace does so in a uniquely Roman manner. He describes meeting a young girl in an urban square; however, this scene couldn’t have existed in Archaic Greece where all the states were small polises. Furthermore, Horace continues, “nunc et latentis proditor intimo gratus puellae risus ab angulo pignusque dereptum lacertis aut digito male pertinaci” “and now the traitor, the pleasing laughter of the concealed girl, arises from the corner and the symbol having been pulled off the arms or mischievously pulled from the obstinate finger.” Women in the Greek world were mostly secluded unless they were prostitutes who had a greater degree of freedom. However, the woman in this scene is neither a prostitute nor a secluded maiden. She is not secluded because she is in the open square; however, she is not a prostitute either because of the way she plays with him in the corner, giving him a symbol of her devotion. Horace also differs from Alcaeus in that he varies the tone of his speakers. Greek lyric also advocates for an equanimity toward death and a slight hope that the circumstances might change through the gods’ intervention. This is shown through Archilochus 130. However, Horace varies his speaker. Some have hope that the gods might intervene in life’s circumstances like 2.10. However, others show a much more despairing attitude such as 4.7. In 4.7, he says, “immortalia ne speres, monet annus et alium quae rapit hora diem; frigora mitescunt Zephyris, ver proterit aestas interitura simul pomifer Autumnus fruges effuderit, et mox bruma recurrit iners.” Don’t hope for immortality, the year and hour which seizes the nourishing day warns, the colds soften the west winds, summer crushes spring, summer about to cease once fruit bearing Autumn brings forth fruits, and soon the inactive winter returns. The continuous refrain of seasons emphasizes Horace’s despair because it is one reminder after another that unlike the seasons man is not immortal. Nature may be able to transition from spring to summer to autumn to winter; however, man is subject to a limited lifespan. Furthermore, here Horace explicitly states this connection that unlike the seasons man is not immortal. He says, “damna tamen celeres reparant caelestia lunae: nos ubi decidimus quo pater Aeneas, quo Tullus dives et Ancus, pulvis et umbra sumus” and “yet the quickly changing moons recoup their losses in the sky; we, when we have gone down to the same place as Father Aeneas, as rich Tullus and Ancus, are dust and shadow.” Although the elements of nature can arrive and die in an infinite cycle, man is subject to a linear, limited lifespan. He states later that even the great heroes, Aeneas and Tullus, could not escape from death. Between the exemplum and scenes of nature, it creates a constant refrain: man cannot escape from death. However, the ultimate tone of the *Odes* is hope. Although 4.7 demonstrates despair, Horace uses the despair in this poem to highlight the proper response which is to enjoy the symposium and the time man has been given. Horace imitated Greek lyric in meters, themes, and structures but created a uniquely Roman product by altering his tone and adding Roman elements. Thanks for listening.