“I am a pig” (Hor., Epist. 1.4 and 5)¹

It sometimes happens that an issue apparently unimportant, and even futile, leads us very far. So when Horace at the end of a short epistle to the poet Tibullus (Epist. 1.4), calls himself “a pig from Epicurus’ herd”, Epicuri de grege porcum, we remain somewhat perplexed about the meaning of this particular humor, and we wonder why it’s Tibullus over another person who should be invited to come and laugh about the shiny animal (Me pinguem and nitidum... uises / Cum ridere uoles). And, in addition, we would like to know why Horace wanted to link this epistle so closely to the next one, which seems to have almost nothing to do with it in terms of theme and content. The echoes between the two pieces are indeed numerous: diuitias, 7 – diuitiarum, 8 ; artemque fruendi, 7 – si non conceditur uti, 12, artis, 18 ; mundus, 11 – munda, 7 ; curam, 12 – curam, 13 ; spem, 12 – spes, 8, 17 ; supremum, 13 – supremo, 3. It is to the point that a scholar once defined the second piece as a "commentary" of the former². All right, but that gives us no information on the nature of the relationship between a greeting addressed to Tibullus and a dinner invitation sent to Torquatus.

To resolve this problem, it might be helpful to reflect about the date where that dinner is supposed to take place, namely a 22 September. Indeed, if September 22 was the day before the anniversary of the birth of Emperor Augustus, as stated in verse 9 (cras nato Caesare), it turns out that it was also the day after the anniversary of Virgil’s death³. However, the name of Virgil is never pronounced in this epistle, or throughout the First Book. This silence is rather surprising, coming from a man who regarded the Mantuan poet as “half of his soul” (animae diminium meae, Od. 1.3.8), and who had just put him on the spot in both the Satires and the Odes.

Could it be thus that the epistles 4 and 5 form a configuration similar to the one present in Ovid's Amores, where there is apparently no thematic relationship between two

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¹ This article revises and refines the pages 157-67 of La mort de Virgile d’après Horace et Ovide, 2d ed., J. Touzot, Paris, 1999. The Epistle 1.5 has been investigated under the light of cacozelia latens by B. Schmitz: http://www.espace-horace.org/etud/schmitz1.htm.


pieces yet formally united, Elegy 3.9 on the death of Tibullus, and Elegy 2.6 on the death of Corinna’s parrot, unless, under the brilliant colors of the exotic bird, one comes to discover the face of Virgil, to whom it is inconceivable that Ovid would have failed to pay (at least) an equal tribute as the one he paid to Tibullus, his companion in death (comitem) within a few weeks. We should therefore wonder whether there is a secret allusion to Virgil in the epistle to Torquatus, as was the case in the elegy on Corinna’s parrot.

But, you will say, if the date of September 22 or 21 (see below p. 7) has for Horace no significance linked to Virgil, doesn’t it prove that when this invitation was sent, the author of the Aeneid was still alive? And, by the way, was not the First Book of Epistles published in 20 BC, a year before Virgil’s death? Well, the answer might be no. Certainly, by putting the end to his collection, Horace tells us (20.26-28) that he was forty-four in December 21 BC, but it does not follow from this that the book was published as soon as the next year, since it contains allusions to historical events that took place after 20, such as the settlement of the Armenian question, the restitution of the standards by Phraates, the king of Parthia (12.26), or the victory of Agrippa on Cantabrians (ibid.), which Horace could hardly have known before 19 BC. Let’s give him the time needed for the architectural organization of the collection, and we arrive at 18 BC, a date confirmed – this is no coincidence – by a detail relating to the wine that will be served to Torquatus: it is a vintage of 26 BC (v. 4), and we also know that

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7 Cf. D. H. Porter, pp. 80 n. 3, and 81 n. 1.

Horace used to offer his distinguished guests, such as Maecenas, a "nine years old" wine (Od. 4.11.1). The calculation is quickly made: we are in the year 18 BC.

Thus, the way is cleared for those who would decide to examine these two pieces in the light of the double event that shook the Roman literary world in a very short interval: Virgil’s and Tibullus’ deaths. However, we must admit that the author did everything to give the change. So we should first of all try to determine whether Horace is here talking in his own name, sua persona, or whether he has left his place to an anonymous speaker we would have to identify. The poets trained to cacozelia latens were accustomed to this sort of trick, as Horace abundantly proves in his works, and not least in the First Book of Epistles, which concerns us here.

Carelessness or vulgarity features abound in both pieces. Note in the first one: reptare, 4 (supposedly to say "walk in small steps"!), maius, 8 (rather than plus, or melius), qui, 9 (instead of ut), contingat abunde, 10, and especially the whole verse 11 (Et mundus uictus non deficiente crumina), where the popular touch of the second element ("a never-failing purse") can only contaminate the first ("an elegant way of life", perhaps, but rather "a neat food", or even "a clean table"). And what of the heavy emphasis on the importance of money (this verse picks up diuittas, 7), when you address the delicate poet who, after being ruined by civil wars, said he was content with what he had (Ego... despician dites, "I shall despise the rich", Tib.,1.1.77-78)? As for the final metaphor assimilating Ego with a pig, it certainly means to be funny, but let’s recall that it comes from the stock of the most basic, and most vulgar, anti-Epicureanism of all times. Moreover, it would be rather surprising to see Horace choose the pig as an ideal, when, in a previous epistle (2.23-31), which is referred here by a very clear echo (porcum picks up sus, and bene curata cute resumes in cute curanda), he pilloried as “pigs” those sybarites who shamelessly wallow in the mire of pleasures.

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9 F. Plessis, Horace. Œuvres, Hachette, Paris, 1911, ad loc.: “Si l’épître est de 20, c’était un vin de six ans, encore un peu jeune pour un vin d’Italie.” Note in passing that, according to the method of counting in Antiquity, from 20 to 26 there are seven years, and not six.

10 See the article referred to supra n. 8; for the Odes, http://www.espace-horace.org/jym/ sommaire.htm; for the Roman elegiac poets, Jeux de Masques dans l’élégie latine, Peeters, Louvain –Namur, 1998.


12 One might object that in this passage from Epistle 1.2, Horace includes himself among those "pigs", since he thus continues: Nos numerus sumus... /… nebulones Alcinoique, "We are masses, frank scoundrels, the same as
The gathering is not bad either in the next piece: so *Conruget nares*, "will pinch the nostrils", 23, condemned unequivocally by Quintilian as *indecorum*, "unseemly" (*Inst Or.* 11.3.80), or *adsidet insano*, 14, a metaphorical use ("he's sitting next to crazy" = "he is crazy"), which is found nowhere else\(^{13}\), or the pleonasm of *foras* with *eliminet*, 25, or the substitution of *uel* to *aut* at line 6, or the punctilious and burlesque insistence (v. 7 and 21-24) on the cleanliness of laundry and dishes (*toral* like *mappa* being "probably popular", as notes J. Préaux)\(^{14}\), or the pretentious enjambment *et non / Inuitus*, 21-22, or the clumsy joke at line 29 on goat smells (*caprae*, 29) that might inconvenience the guests in too large a company.

It is true that the obsession with money is hidden under appearances to the contrary, since the menu will consist only of vegetables (v. 2), accompanied by a wine that apparently will not be Falernian nor Massic (but yet Campanian: Horace, for his part, is used to serve modest wines from Sabine (*Od.* 1.20) or Alba (*Od*. 4.11)). But the reality is that the speaker is a wealthy man, since he indulges in line 12 to evoke euphorically his fortune (*Quo mihi fortunam si not conceditur uti?* “What’s the point of possessing fortune, if I’m not allowed to enjoy it?”), and, after having provocingly invited Torquatus to bring himself his own food if the intended menu does not suit him, he rather curtly advises him to “give up the contest of wealth” with him (*Mitte… certamina diuitiarum*, 8). Probably because Torquatus would have no chance at that game.

Now let’s ask ourselves who could afford to serve only vegetables to such a considerable host as Torquatus\(^{15}\) (if this is not a pseudonym: see below), and address him in a tone so sassy, apart from the usual anti-Ego of Horace poetry, we have named the Emperor Augustus. Besides the fact that this identification is already suggested by the concentric plan, which makes Epistle 15, of which Augustus is the speaker, the symmetric of Epistle 5\(^{16}\), there is no lack of evidence for it throughout our text, starting from its very beginning:

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\(^{15}\) Cf. F. Villeneuve [*supra* n. 6], *Introd.*, pp. 13-14.

\(^{16}\) See the article referred to *supra* n. 8.
Si potes Archiacis conuia recumbere lectis

Nec modica cenare times holus omne patella…

“If you can bear to recline at dinner on a couch

By Archias, and dine off a modest dish of greens…”17

For want of anything better, commentators follow Porphyrian in identifying this mysterious Archias with a harmless carpenter (just as the Virgil of Ode 4.12 is often thought to be a plain perfumer), but *si potes* and *nec times* would surely find a more satisfactory justification if *Archiacis* referred by metonymy to some real (historic) and fearsome Archias, such as that famous tyrant of Thebes18, or that emissary of Antipater who drove Demosthenes into suicide19, or even that murderer of Archilochus of Paros20. You do not sit without trembling at the table of the master of Rome, even if he ostensibly kills only vegetables (cf. 12.21), its favorite food, according to Suetonius21. And as regards line 12, quoted above (*Quo mihi fortunam…?*), instead of confusing the singular of the word *fortuna* (“luck”) with its plural (“wealth”), we should realize that the character is proclaiming his omnipotence: “Why wouldn’t I have the right to enjoy the advantages that Fortune gives me?” *Fortuna*, that is to say his social position, but also the deified Fortune who made him the *Princeps* of Rome22.

Add to this a tone of affected solemnity which perfectly fits the imperial buffoon, as well as his parody of the official style of edicts, especially visible in lines 21 ff.23, or again his insistence on the idea of *imperium: imperium*, 6, *imperor*, 21, the latter particularly tortuous

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22 On his return to Rome on October 12 of that year (Dio Cassius, 54.9-10; Frontin, *De aq.* 10), Augustus had nothing more urgent to do than to erect an altar in honor of *Fortuna Redux*, a structure which was directly related to his person by the institution of *Augustalia*, and was dedicated as soon as December.
23 This is dutifully noted by commentators, such as Villeneuve, Dilke, Préaux, Mayer.
because, under a passive ("I am ordered"), already unusual in itself, it actually amounts to an active ("I order")\textsuperscript{24}.

The identification of Augustus as the speaker of Epistle 5 gives us a precious indication about its date, for it is historically attested that the emperor back from East in 19 BC did not return to Rome before October, i.e. after his birthday. The date of 18 BC we proposed above is thus confirmed. Now, who will believe that, just a year after Virgil’s death, Horace, without a word about his deceased friend, would have had no other concern than joyously celebrate the birthday of Augustus? It remains therefore to demonstrate that, under playful or even burlesque appearances, the death of Virgil is indeed at the heart of this epistle.

It begins with that \textit{Archiacis}, which, as we have seen, might evoke a despot, and even a poet’s killer. Then, in verse 3, the phrase \textit{supremo... sole}, by echoing \textit{diem... supremum} of Epistle 4 (v. 13), takes a rather disquieting resonance. At lines 4 and 5, the allusion to the city of Sinuessa spontaneously evokes to the reader of the \textit{Satires} (\textit{Sat.} 1.5.40) that famous trip to Brindisi, which was transfigured by the presence of Virgil accompanied with Varius Rufus and Plotius Tucca, who would eventually be in charge of editing the \textit{Aeneid} after its author’s death:

\textit{Plotius et Varius Sinuessae Vergiliusque}.

Further on, when Torquatus is bluntly prompted to "abandon airy hopes" (\textit{Mitte leuis spes}, 8), except in the vapors of alcohol (\textit{spes iubet esse ratas}, “it [wine] fulfills our hopes”, 17), and to forget the trial of Moschus, \textit{Moschi causam}, 9, one is entitled to question the relation between these two injunctions if Moschus is to be identified, as the doxa believes, to the Greek rhetorician who was accused of poisoning, and was defended by Asinius Pollio and Torquatus. But it makes full sense when we refer this \textit{Moschus} to the famous bucolic poet of that name (Moschos), as an appropriate mask for the author of the \textit{Eclogues}\textsuperscript{25}. In case Torquatus would be tempted to speak in favor of the dead Virgil, he is forewarned: he must not say a word about the case, and renounce once and for all to hopes for political change, as well as to the spiritual ideals he might still cherish before this terrible blow against the prince of poets. Despite the coincidence of dates, it’s not to honor the memory of Virgil that they

\textsuperscript{24} “Mais le commandement vient de lui-même”, F. Villeneuve; The verb is used virtually in a reflexive sense, “charge myself”", O. A. W. Dilke [\textit{supra} n. 13].

\textsuperscript{25} Like Bion : cf. “Chant funèbre en l’honneur de Virgile”, \textit{Paideia} 48 (1993), 241-46.
will meet, but to celebrate the emperor’s birthday. So, they need not worry (impune licebit, 10), since they have the green light from Augustus himself (v. 9-10):

*Cras nato Caesare festus / Dat ueniam somnumque dies.*

“tomorrow, Caesar’s birthday / Gives us a reason for sleeping late.”

This translation by A. S. Kline unfortunately blurs the term *uenia*, and does not give its due to *dies*, placed in strategic position at the end of the sentence. In the famous *Carpe Diem* poem (Od. 1.11), the personified *Dies* appears to be the representation of the celestial Jupiter (*Dies Pater*), and through him, of the terrestrial Jupiter, Augustus27, who here *dat ueniam somnumque*, “permission and sleep”, i.e. license to meet in such an ambiguous day (that’s all the misunderstanding on which this epistle is built) without fearing the Prince’s wrath; or, more simply (with an hendiadys), the right to sleep.

Incidentally, the phrase *Cras nato Caesare* does not necessarily mean that the invitation was launched on September 22, since we know from Suetonius that the festivities related to the anniversary of Augustus lasted two days28. It might therefore be right to understand as follows: “tomorrow (September 22) is holiday (like after tomorrow) because of Augustus’ birthday” (*Caesare* in the third person, after the style of Julius Caesar).

And suddenly this irrepressible cry, this explosion of anger:

*Quo mihi fortunam si non conceditur uti?*

which a superficial reading would interpret as the cheerful signal of the drinking described in the following verses (13-20), and nothing more. But some attention paid to the verb *conceditur* in a revaluated context should lead us to give this exclamation a much greater significance: “I am the master, I have every right”. He is justifying his crime: “Yes, I killed him, and then? Tell me by what right I would have been prohibited from doing so.” He adds that he does not care heirs (*parcus ob heredis curam*...), in the same way that the speaker of

28 *biduo*: Suet., *Aug.* 57. Admittedly, those two days might have as well been the 23d and 24th. But verse 11, which speaks of a summer evening, would rather lead us to think about the night of September 21-22.
the Ode 1.28 did not care whether he harmed posterity by killing "Archytas" (Neglegis immeritis..., 30 ff.) 29.

Finally, Torquatus learns the name of the other guests who will participate in the party, including a certain Sabine (Sabinus), who reminds us of the Sabellus of Epistle 1.16 (v. 49), i.e. possibly Horace himself. So the poet would be mocked in passing for his proud resistance to the tempting advances of the Princeps 30 (Sabinus is derisively invited to join the company, "unless he has better things to do", cena prior potiorque puella). But with Butra and Septicius (v. 26), that makes only five. So the speaker adds: Locus est et pluribus umbris, “There is room too for several shadows”, 28. But what does it mean? The scholarship may be right in seeing in these umbrae some so-called "parasites" that the guests to a dinner used to bring with them (cf. Sat. 2.8.22), but at this point of the analysis, it is hard to believe that this term does not hide any sarcastic intent, especially as this suspicion finds support and encouragement in the next line:

Sed nimis arta premunt olidae conuia caprae.

“but goatish smells spoil overcrowded / Feasts.” 31

Indeed, if we wonder why the billy goat (hircus or caper) 32, which usually represents in Latin the bothering underarm odor, is here replaced by nanny goats, perhaps we shall be led, willy nilly, through the clear identification of caprae with umbrae, to recognize here a malignant allusion to the poet of the Eclogues, thus likened to his "beloved goats," his capellae, symbolic of bucolic poetry according to Ode 1.17 (v. 3) 33.

But it is time to return to the Fourth Epistle. As we have seen, it is inseparable from the Fifth, and their stylistic unity assures us that the poet has not looked here, as he sometimes

30 We know for example that he declined the offer made to him by Augustus to become his personal secretary: http://www.espace-horace.org/etud/vita.htm.
In the Odes also, Horace (under a pseudonym, such as Lycidas in 1.4 and 3.19) appears to be a target for Augustus: http://www.espace-horace.org/jym/sommaire.htm.
31 Translation by A. S. Kline.
33 http://www.espace-horace.org/jym/odes_1/O_I_17.htm. The capellae are highlighted in the first Bucolic as in the last (v. 12, 74, 77); in the fifth, it’s the kids (v. 12), and the hero of Damon’ s Chant in the eighth happens to be a goatherd (v. 33), as well as Meliboeus in the seventh (v. 7-9), etc. For the virtual assimilation of the herdsman / poet to his flock / work, see Violence et ironie dans les Bucoliques, pp. 196-97.
does, for an antinomy\textsuperscript{34}: so we have no reason to doubt that the same speaker is at work in both pieces. And perhaps the phrase \textit{sermonum nostrorum} in the first line is already a signature:

\textit{Albi, nostrorum sermonum candide iudex.}

In the classical analyze, the \textit{sermones} in question would designate Horace’s \textit{Satires} ("my talks"). But one may be skeptical on an interpretation which results in reducing this poem to an unfathomable platitude: “What are you doing right now, my dear Tibullus, sincere judge of my \textit{Satires}? Writing something, or creeping about in silence, and reflecting on wisdom? In any event, you are lucky because nature has been generous with you, and your wallet is nicely swollen. But death awaits us every day. If you want a good laugh, come one day to see the fat Epicurean hog that I am.”

Poor Horace…\textsuperscript{35} However, if our assumption is correct, this miserable heap of nonsensical platitudes instantly lights up with the dark flames of hatred and sarcasm, just in the way of the next piece. To begin with, why would Tibullus judge the \textit{Satires} instead of the \textit{Odes}, one of which, as it happens, is personally dedicated to him (1.33)? And why reduce to the role of literary criticist (excluded, what is more, from any competence in lyric poetry), a man who is the great poet we know? Let’s rather understand \textit{nostrorum} as a plural of majesty proper to the imperial speaker ("my imperial conversations", or words, or style, in fact “my policy”), and we will be able to perceive here an allusion to the work of Tibullus, which skillfully alternates elegies in which the author speaks in his own name with those where he leaves the place to anti-Ego, alias a copiously caricatured Augustus\textsuperscript{36}. That would clarify the enigmatic line 3, where Tibullus is presented as a rival of Cassius of Parma, the virulent anti-Caesarian pamphleteer, who participated in the murder of Julius Caesar, what he paid with his

\textsuperscript{34} Examples abound in Augustan elegiac poetry of twinned pieces which are in violent opposition (within the dialectic anti-Ego vs Ego). So Propertius, 1.21-22: \url{http://virgilmurder.org/images/pdf/prospbrag.pdf}.

Ovid, \textit{Amor}. 2.13-14 : \url{http://virgilmurder.org/images/pdf/ovidavort.pdf}.

\textsuperscript{35} As such, however, and, so to speak, unprocessed, this epistle has found ardent admirers: see for example Alain Michel, “Poétique et sagesse dans les \textit{Odes} d’Horace”, \textit{REL} 70 (1992), pp. 128-29: "ce texte… admirable", "grâce du chant".

\textsuperscript{36} Cf. \textit{Jeux de Masques}… [\textit{supra} n. 10], without forgetting the necessary rectification about 2.2: \url{http://virgilmurder.org/images/pdf/rectific.pdf}. 

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life. Cassius had the salary he deserved: death. Logically, Tibullus, his emulator, has been condemned to the same sentence, and he is already dead.

Provided that we keep our ears open, the funeral note will be heard from the turn of the second verse:

*Quid nunc te dicam facere…?*

But it is only too easy to trivialize the adverb *nunc* in its ordinary meaning of "now", as if it were of any interest to know whether "in this moment" Tibullus is writing or rather walking in the woods. Simply losing this *nunc* in translation might seem to be an acceptable solution ("what shall I / Say you’re doing in your native country?")\(^{38}\), but it is actually disastrous, for it ignores the dramatic potentiality which is in *nunc*, as illustrated by numerous examples (e.g. Aen. 10.612, 630; 11.823): *nunc* is capable of breaking dreams and hopes (see the advice given to Torquatus: *Mitte leuis Spes, 8*)\(^{39}\), it makes you brutally return to harsh reality. On the lips of an enemy, it marks the jubilation of victory: “Tibullus, you who set yourself up as a censor of my person and my policy, look where that’s got you! Are you still writing your scathing epigrams against me (I doubt it!), or are you haunting the woods\(^{40}\) in your out-of-the-way region, philosophizing in the form of a serpent?” The verb *reptare* in line 4 ("creep") should disturb the translators, but no, they adapt, dismissing it as a way of speaking. By the same token, the speaker’s irony escapes them when he says that Tibullus has today all the time (and for good reason!) to reflect on his past mistakes (v. 5):

*Curantem quicquid dignum sapiente bonoque est.*

“Thinking of all that belongs to the wise and good.”

But the idea of wisdom and virtue defended by this particular moralist is perhaps not quite in accordance with Horace’s own credo\(^{41}\). For Augustus, wisdom and virtue consist

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\(^{37}\) Such a comparison between the bitter writer of epigrams and the gentle elegiac poet is certainly challenging. It seems that E. Turolla, *Q. Orazio Flacco. Le Epistole*, Bibl. Loescheriano, Torino, 1962 has had a kind of intuition when he speaks (*ad loc.*, n. 4) of “un sapore dispregiativo”.

\(^{38}\) Translation by A. S. Kline.

\(^{39}\) *Spem longam reseces, Od.* I, 11.

\(^{40}\) By a refinement of irony, these woods are called *salubris*!

\(^{41}\) In the Epistle 16, which faces the 4th in the concentric plan, the *uir bonus et sapiens* refers to the heroic victim of tyranny (v. 73). See the article referred to *supra* n. 8.
simply in pledging full allegiance to himself, and Tibullus has learned the hard way what it costs to oppose his sovereign will.

Being condemned to survive in a reptilian, or larval, form, Tibullus will expiate forever his crime of lese-majesty. It's in the same way that Virgil, in the epistle to Torquatus, is supposed to survive as a "smelly goat"… or perhaps also as a snake, if it is true that the "client" whom Torquatus is invited to escape through a back door (v. 31) is none other than Moschus (Moschi causam, 9), that’s to say the shade of Virgil: and indeed an echo to Aeneid 2.567-68 (limina Vestae / Seruantem: compare Atria servauntem here) tends to assimilate this “client” to Helen of Troy, a “snake” of a sort, since, as P. Lejay notes about Aen. 2.567-68, “Virgile ne parle pas autrement d’un serpent qui garde son gîte, servuantem ripas (Georg. 4.459), tecto assidens (ib., 3.418), et qui se cache, delituit (ib.).”

But in case we had not still understood that Tibullus is no longer of this world when this letter is sent him, here is the verse 6:

Non tu corpus eras sine pectore.

It would seem that the imperfect eras is clear enough, but readers do everything to neutralize it. A. S. Kline achieves this in a subtle manner (“You were never just a body, lacking in feelings.”), for his “never” suffices to suppress the difference between past and present. Some maintain that eras is a real past, so that Horace would reproach Tibullus of having become "a body without a soul", i.e. without heart or mind, others resort to the concept of "hellenism" (“in the manner of the Greeks: eras for es”). The trouble is that one cannot cite any other compelling example of this type in Latin, and that the comparison with Homer,
Od. 17.454-55, duly made by E. Fraenkel, proves anything but what it is supposed to. Ulysses, under the guise of a beggar, launches this reply to Antinous, who insults him:

Ὢ πόποι, οὐκ ἄρα σοί γ᾽ ἐπὶ εἴδεϊ καὶ φρένες ἦσαν.

οὐ σὺ γ᾽ ἂν ἔξ οἴκου σῷ ἐπιστάτη οὐδ᾽ ἁλὰ δοίης.

“My god, you really did not have the heart of your physical appearance: you would not give salt to a beggar!”

The echo is obvious, but the formal similarity only emphasizes a substantial opposition: Antinous was (and still is) a corpus sine pectore, while Tibullus was not (but now is). We see that the alleged Hellenism of the Homeric example is logically explained by a sudden realization: “I thought after your appearance that you were a noble person (cf. v 415-16), but your attitude has disabused me.” How then would there be a Hellenism in Latin when there is none in Greek?47

Moreover, if we quote from Greek, Homer is even less relevant here than Archilochus, yes, the same Archilochus who was said to have been killed by a certain Archias (cf. Archias: supra, p. 5). This acerbic poet wrote an epigram against Lycambes:

Πάτερ Λυκάμβα, ποίον ἔφρασω τόδε;
"What idea has passed through your head, father Lycambes? Who deranged your mind? Until now you were a balanced man, now you’re the laughing stock of your fellow citizens.”

47 One can profitably compare this passage from the Epistle 3, addressed to Julius Florus, who is well alive (v. 21-22): Non tibi paruom / Ingenium, non incultum est et turpiter hirtum, “Your intelligence is not small or or badly uncultivated.”

48 172 W. (Snell).
As can be seen, this reference is much more encompassing than the one from Homer, since it extends to the whole epistle. But who else than a mortal enemy could greet you by drawing from an Archilochus brandishing his vengeful iamb against Lycambes?

From here, however, the tone is no more of triumphant jubilation, but of false commiseration: “You had yet everything to be happy ...” And the many benefits which the deceased enjoyed are duly listed. But through this enumeration the speaker betrays his deep materialism: physical beauty (formam) favor (gratia), reputation (fama), excellent health (ualetudo... abunde: so, Tibullus died in good health), and above all a lot of money (v. 7 and 11). We are here at the antipodes of the moral principles advocated by Horace sua persona: cf. especially 1.6.30-55). However, in this obituary of a new kind, verse 9 deigns to recognize to the deceased, it is the least, a nice ability to express his thoughts and feelings (sapere et fari... quae sentiat) Alas, it is precisely the use of that skill that caused the death of the unwary poet... Everyone will appreciate the irony.

It is also significant that this portrait of Tibullus be placed on the lips of a nurse (“Yet you had everything that a nurse may wish to her beloved baby...”). The speaker appears to forget that a nurse is poorly placed to know what are the true blessings in this world, as Seneca reminds a few years later to his friend Lucilius: Etiam nunc optas quae tibi optauit nutrix tua...? O quam inimica nobis sunt uota nostrorum! (“Are you still wishing to yourself what your nurse wished you...? Oh, how contrary to our interests are the wishes that those who love us make for us!”)

Suddenly, at line 11, the tone changes:

*Inter spem curamque, timores inter et iras,*

*Omnem crede diem tibi diluxisse supremum.*

“Beset by hopes and anxieties, indignation and fear,

Treat every day that dawns for you as the last.”

49 There are no less than four echoes: ποίον ἐφράσσω τόδε (quid nunc te dicam...?); τίς σὺς παρήμερε φρένας? (Non tu corpus eras sine corpore); τὸ πρὶν (the past tenses eras... dederunt); νῦν δὲ (nunc).

50 Sen., *Lucil.* 60, 1.

51 Translation by A. S. Kline.
Despite being somewhat untimely, this sentence does not seem to worry a doxa probably reassured by the familiar aspect of this philosophical advice. However, the emphasis on anxiety, fear and anger should seriously alert us. Placed on the lips of the master of Rome, the phrase sounds like a stern warning: “Enjoy every day, because tomorrow is not yours, it depends on me.” (and again, see Ode 1.11). One may argue that the dead no longer fear death and no longer care about threats: so, how could Tibullus be concerned? That is the reason why we will assume that the last five lines address an anonymous interlocutor\textsuperscript{52}, who could possibly identify with Torquatus (\textit{uises}, 15 announcing thus the next piece); and Torquatus himself might be just a pseudonym for Maecenas, who is Horace’s privileged addressee both in the \textit{Epistles} and in the \textit{Odes}, as well under his own name as under some pseudonym. There are, at any rate, many echoes in the Epistle 5 that refer directly to similar invitations sent to Maecenas\textsuperscript{53}.

Anyway, when, in a final mockery, this character we inadvertently confuse with Horace will assimilate himself to a pig, we will know enough to take him at his word, especially as he comes back again in the epistle 15, where he says he hopes to have good food at a table where he plans to stop halfway, before “returning home big and fat as a Phaeacian”, \textit{Pinguis ut inde domum possim Phaeaxque reuerti}. He does not say "like a pig", for it would be superfluous, this animal being sufficiently evoked with \textit{pinguis} and \textit{Phaeax}\textsuperscript{54}.

\textbf{POST-SCRIPTUM}

Of course, dear visitor, all you have just read here is pure speculation, if not pure delirium. Indeed, how can you imagine for one second that the great Augustus, restorer of civil peace and founder of the Roman Empire, a man who, according to his biographers, actively protected arts and letters, a man who so pampered his beloved poets\textsuperscript{55}, could be for anything in the death of Virgil and Tibullus? \textit{Dat ueniam somnumque Dies}. Have a good night. -jym (2015.11.27).

\textsuperscript{52} This sort of undeclared, and occult, change of addressee also occurs in the \textit{Odes}, for instance in 1.19, 1.20 and 3.2: \url{http://www.espace-horace.org/jym/sommaire.htm}.

\textsuperscript{53} Cf. \textit{La mort de Virgile… [supra n. 1]}, p. 163. O. A. W. Dilke [\textit{supra n. 13}] also notes that the use of \textit{umbrae} (v. 28) in the sense of unexpected guesses, appears already in the Satire 2.8 (v. 21-22), precisely about Maecenas.

\textsuperscript{54} This must be put in relation with the passage of Epistle 2 quoted \textit{supra n. 12}.

\textsuperscript{55} Suet., \textit{Aug.} 89.6.