

More a tacit affinity than a declaration of allegiance, Tacitus' oblique recourse to Horace's *oeuvre* in the *Dialogus de Oratoribus* (hereafter *DDO*) would seem to lack the literary significance readily accorded the numerous Ciceronian and Platonic reminiscences. Such an alliance—the verse of a premier Augustan poet and a prose dialogue on oratory penned more than a century later—makes, *prima facie*, for strange bedfellows. While similarities of language and even of argument among these works have not eluded scholarly notice, the importance of their relationship remains unexplored beyond elementary *Quellenforschung*. My paper discusses how allusion to Horace reflects an essential, coherent—and thus far unappreciated—aspect of the *DDO*'s literary artistry.

Horace's presence in the *DDO* surfaces via distinct yet complementary avenues: assiduous echoes of language, the careful refashioning of his arguments, and a compelling injunction to rely upon poetry and notably Horatian poetry. Scholars have mentioned the most evident parallels of language (Michel (1962), Luce (1993), Mayer (2001), Levene (2004)). Yet, Tacitus also supplements direct linguistic allusion with elements of Horace's thought. At 12.2-4, Maternus' defends poetic *eloquentia* while borrowing from *Ars Poetica* 391-407. Aper's attack, in section 16, upon the arbitrary separation of 'ancients,' *antiqui*, from 'moderns,' *novi*, reprises Horace's scathing contestation of the term *antiqui* (*Epistles*, 2.1.34-49). When Maternus discusses the difference between orators of the Republic and the Empire (41.5), he borrows an argument from *Satires* 1.10. Finally, the *DDO* explicitly highlights Horace's exemplary status in the formation of *eloquentia*. At 20.5, Aper remarks: *exigitur enim iam ab oratore etiam poeticus decor, non Acci et Pacuvi veterno inquinatus, sed ex Horati et Vergili et Lucani sacrario prolatus*. While lambasting aesthetic reactionaries who automatically prefer the old to the new, Aper comments: *sed vobis utique versantur ante oculos isti qui Lucilium pro Horatio...legunt* (23.2).

These references establish a fundamental role for Horace's poetry in the *DDO* and solicit the audience to examine his intertextual value for the work. I show that by indicating an allegiance to Horace, the *DDO* carefully manipulates the themes and values to which his poetry gave expression. In particular, Tacitus transposes the literary reflections of the *Satires* and *Epistles* onto the *DDO*'s sophisticated evaluation of contemporary *eloquentia*. I first discuss their shared conceptions of literary evolution and the specific transformations of Horace in the *DDO*. I then assess the consequences of these borrowings for the *DDO*'s message. First, I claim that Tacitus incorporates Horace as part of a programmatic justification of modern *eloquentia*. In particular, I build upon the suggestions by Costa (1969) and Goldberg (1999) (seconded by Fantham (2004)) that the *DDO* offers much more than a mere explanation of rhetorical decline (for which cf., most recently, Mayer (2001)). Second, I claim that a significant reliance upon a strictly poetic forebear challenges our expectations for a dialogue written, by all appearances, in the traditions of Cicero (cf. Michel (1962), Haß-von Reitzenstein (1970), Döpp (1986)) and Plato (cf. Allison (1999), Rutledge (2000)). The scholarly focus upon prose forerunners is partly upset by Horace's fundamental role in the work. Tacitus employs Horace as an alternate model for his dialogue and thereby underscores the enduring value of modern *eloquentia*. Lastly, I claim that by explicitly signalling Horace's exemplary status, Tacitus calculatedly justifies the *DDO*'s appropriation of his poetry. In joining example to precept, the *DDO* enacts the literary values to which it gives voice. In summary, the *DDO*'s references to Horace form an indispensable component of its literary makeup. Only by understanding Horace's presence there can we appreciate the innovative sophistication of its message.