

**Ronnie ANCONA**  
**"Tensile Horace": Negotiating Critical Boundaries**

Most Horatian scholars see as central to Horace's literary project a poetics that is constituted by various "tensions" surrounding issues of literary, social, and historical "negotiation". Central to that process of negotiation is the constitution of a self or selves who perform that negotiation. It is the purpose of this paper to identify several of these "tensions" and "selves" within Horace's work and to show how they are enacted in a specific poem.

Using Odes 1.37 (the so-called Cleopatra Ode) as the focal point for discussion, I will show how recent Horatian scholarship can be brought to bear on reading and teaching this particular poem. I will utilize Oliensis on "face" and "authority and deference," Davis and Lowrie on "lyric as political negotiator," Putnam on Horace's "conditionality" in relation to Augustus, Bowditch on the "gift economy" of Horace's poetry, and Ancona on "power and desire" to show how issues of gender, power, political stance, generic choice, and literary support are all part of the reading of the poem. Rather than argue for a particular or exclusive reading, I hope to show that the major themes of the work of the scholars mentioned above can be readily understood in the context of the poem and, in turn, how the reading of the poem can be expanded or enriched through an awareness of their critical perspectives.

A hand-out will be distributed that will contain key notions from the scholars mentioned above as well as additional passages from Horace's poetry that can be used in teaching students about current scholarly ideas. A brief bibliography of the most recent book-length treatments of Horace will also be included.

References:

- Ancona, R. *Time and the Erotic in Horace's Odes* (Durham 1994)  
Bowditch, P.L. *Horace and the Gift Economy of Patronage* ( Berkeley 2001)  
Davis, G. *Polyhymnia: The Rhetoric of Horatian Discourse* (Berkeley 1991)  
Lowrie, M. *Horace's Narrative Odes* (Oxford 1997)  
Oliensis, E. *Horace and the Rhetoric of Authority* (Cambridge 1998)  
Putnam, M. *Horace's Carmen Saeculare* (New Haven 2000)