



Gillespie, S. (2023) William Popple's Horatian Epistles: a selection. *Translation and Literature*, 32(2), pp. 157-193.

There may be differences between this version and the published version. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite from it.

<https://eprints.gla.ac.uk/298321/>

Deposited on: 12 May 2023

Enlighten – Research publications by members of the University of Glasgow
<https://eprints.gla.ac.uk>

William Popple's Horatian Epistles: A Selection

Stuart Gillespie

Selections from William Popple's unprinted Horatian imitations of the 1750s have been presented in these pages twice before.¹ For this final outing I turn to Popple's previously unprinted Horatian Epistles, selecting seven from the full set of twenty-two. The manuscript source is, as before, Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, Osborn MS fc 104, 1-2. Here, a presentation uniform with the previous two (on editorial principles previously outlined) has been aimed at. So has stand-alone annotation rather than cross-reference to previous editorial material. For Popple's biography and some of the wider contexts, however, reference should be made to, in particular, my 2022 article (n. 1).

University of Glasgow

Epistle 1.1

The mixed economy of Popple's approach as an imitator is apparent. A friend stands in for Maecenas, and London for Rome, in the references to Goodman's Fields or Richmond Hill. The wider world, too, is the modern one, containing '*England or America*' (33). But two lines later the name of Aristippus, the Greek philosopher, is retained. Most important is how much Horace's world and Popple's have in common: the '*Levees of the Great*' (72) or the expensive counsel who '*Law's Mysteries unfold*' (104).

Horace Book 1st Epistle 1st

Imitated.

¹ See my 'An English Version of Horace's *Odes, Satires, and Epistles* by William Popple (1700-1764)', *T&L*, 16 (2007), 205-35, and 'William Popple's Horatian Satires: Further Texts from the Osborn Manuscript', *T&L*, 31 (2022), 179-229.

Inscrib'd to Richard Ince Esq.¹

O worthy to be sung thro' endless Time,
 To shine distinguish'd in immortal Rhyme!
 Dear *Ince*! The Friend of my maturer Days,
 Whom *Steele*, true Judge of Man, has deign'd to praise,²
 Now moulded^o quite, and sinking into Age, *become mouldy*
 Why will you ask me once more to engage?
 Alas! my *Genius*, and my *Age* is cold;
 'Tis time to cease from *Toil*, when we grow old.
 Bid the Newmarket Youth bring forth the Steed³ –
 10 “No Sir, he's past, I keep him now for breed” –
 Bid *Broughton*⁴ once more stand on his defence,
 “No, *Slack*,⁵ wise *Slack*, has taught him better Sense.”

¹ *Richard Ince Esq.*] Richard Ince (*d.* 1758), Popple's fellow-alumnus of Westminster School; Comptroller of the Pay Office 1740-52 under the patronage of Granville, the dedicatee of Popple's Epistle 1.7, below.

² *Steele ... praise*] Richard Steele wrote in *Spectator* 555 of the 'excellent sentiments and agreeable pieces' which had been contributed to the journal by the young Ince, then of Gray's Inn.

³ *Newmarket ... Steed*] Newmarket, a town in Suffolk, was and remains the home of thoroughbred horse-racing in England.

⁴ *Broughton*] John 'Jack' Broughton (1704-1789), 'father of Boxing', early champion bareknuckle fighter, who brought in the first rules of the sport.

⁵ *Slack*] John 'Jack' Slack (1721-1768), 'the Norfolk Butcher', bareknuckle boxer, famed for defeating Broughton in 1750.

Ev'n factious *Patriots*,¹ who no bounds could keep,
 Titled and *Sinecur'd*, profoundly sleep –
 A Minister is now no frightful Thing,
 Nay, they can bear to look upon a King;
 Unwilling to expose their last retreat,
 They suffer^o *H—*² to be wise and great! *allow*
 'Tis *Reason*, Friend, or Something very near,
 20 Whispers these Admonitions in my Ear.
 Hence, then, each *Muse*, and ev'ry playful Theme:
 What's true and fit, is all I now esteem.
 Youth's flow'ry prime to *Pleasures* may invite,
 'Tis *Age's* business to pursue what's *Right*;
 'Tis hers to know, where *Truth* and *Virtue* lies,
 To find it first, and afterwards to prize.
 But should you ask who shews this glorious Plan,
 'Tis neither *This* nor *That* – nor any *Man*!
 Untaught by others' Creeds to form my own,
 30 Sometimes in *Company*, sometimes alone,
 Where'er *Life's Tempest* drives, a *Guest* I roam,
 And wheresoe'er I go – am still at *Home*.
 In *England* or *America* the same,
 And *Virtue*, be it what it may, my aim.
 Like *Aristippus*,³ where I am, still bate^o *check, control*
 And rule my *Temper* to my present *State*;
 Enjoying all Things, but enjoy'd by none,
 Alternately I follow, and I shun.

¹ Patriots] The term 'patriot' 'fell into particular discredit in the earlier half of the 18th cent.' (OED), being used 'ironically for a factious disturber of the government' (Johnson).

² H—] Unidentified.

³ Aristippus] The Greek philosopher, as in Horace; but in Horace invoked as an advocate of controlling one's circumstances, here more of self-control.

Slow as the Night to which the am'rous *Maid*
 40 Her still-expecting *Lover* has delay'd;
 Slow as the Day-light to the lab'ring Hind,
 Or tedious *Year* to youthful *Wards* confin'd –
 So moves each heavy Moment which delays
 The noble *Plan* of all my future Days;
 The *Plan* which, follow'd, cures the poor man's *Ill*,
 And makes the *wealthy* Man more *wealthy* still –
 The *Plan*, which as we deviate from, or hold,
 Will serve, or hurt, alike both young and old.

Timely pursu'd, this Precept's good, you'll say;
 50 "But when *Life's* ebbing *Tide* steals fast away" –
 Is Time then lost, a Reason still to wait?
 This Comfort yet remains: 'tis not too late.
 What tho' not happy, in the strongest Eyes:
 Shall I all Care neglect, when *Humours* rise?
 Less tall than you – than brawny *T—r*¹ strong,
 Shall I not, while I may, my Life prolong?
 Still to advance, is something still to gain;
 All Men may get, tho' all cannot attain.

Does *Avarice* or *Gain* torment your *Soul*?
 60 Wisdom shall soften, and their Force control.
 Does Pride within your gen'rous Bosom swell?
Philosophy that *Phantom* shall expel.
 Does *Envy*, *Anger*, *Sloth*, or *Wine* or *Love*?
 All these oppos'd, will instantly remove:
 For none was yet so much his Passion's Slave
 But might reform, if he attention gave.
 Then give it, *Friend* – and from the *Muse* receive
 The last best *Lesson* she has left to give.

The *Road* to *Virtue* is the *Road* from *Vice*;

¹ T—r] Unidentified.

- 70 *Folly* expell'd° the *Mind* is *Wisdom*'s price! *expelled from*
 You would be rich, and you have no *Estate*?
 You dare not haunt the *Levees* of the *Great*?
 You have no *Friends* to ask, or if you had,
 To be refus'd, were equally as bad?
 To fly from *Want*, you'll to the *Indies* go?
 Do – and ten thousand greater *Evils* know.
 Thro' *Fire* and *Water*, *Rocks* and *Tempests*, fly,
 And ev'ry *Toil*, and ev'ry *Danger* try.
 All this without repining you can bear,
- 80 Yet think it hard, a *Friend*'s *Advice* to hear!
 A *Friend*, forever beautiful and kind,
 The only *Solace* of a troubled *Mind*:
Wisdom, which shows how vain our *Wishes* are,
 And offers something worthier of our *Care*.
 Damp'd° with the *Dangers* which forerun *Success*, *discouraged*
 And poorly satisfied with being less;
 With *Talents* fit to top the *Player*'s *Part*,
 Had *Garrick* thus confess'd° his noble *Art*, *acknowledged*
 Had he in *Goodman's Fields*¹ till now remain'd,
- 90 How had the *Man* his present *Glory* stain'd°? *obscured*
 Wiser by far, he chose at once to rise,
 And gain'd, and now enjoys, the noble *Prize*.
 Richer than *Silver* are the *Golden Mines*;
 Richer than both, resplendent *Virtue* shines.
 This is plain *Truth* – now mark the *World*'s false *Text*:
 “Get *Money* first, my *Friend*, and *Virtue* next.”
 So talk the *Old*; the young ones so repeat,
 This *Maxim* hits the *Low* as well as *Great*.

¹ Garrick ... Goodman's Fields] David Garrick's friend Henry Giffard established a theatre, initially unlicensed, in this district of Whitechapel in 1740, where Garrick's first London stage appearances took place well away from the fashionable theatrical venues in 1741-2.

The miserable Boy who cleans your Shoes,
 100 The well dress'd *Whore* who glitters in the Stews,
 The *Gold* the *Banker* counts repays his *Toil*,
 The *Soldier* fights but for the Hope of *Spoil* –
 God's Word deliver'd is retail'd for *Gold*,
 And *Counsel* fee'd *Law's* *Mysteries* unfold.
 Have *Worth* or *Honour*, *Parts* – have what you will –
 Want the *per annum*, you're no *Member*¹ still:
 Unfit to shine in your own proper Sphere,
 Because you want *Three Hundred Pounds* a year.
 Wiser our *Boys* who in their little *Plays*,
 110 Him who does *best*, to higher Honours raise,
 So its true Standard, *Virtue*, Infants bring:
 Who plays the best with them, he is their *King*.
 Here stick we all – taught by unletter'd *Youth*,
 Be this one great, one universal *Truth*.
 Turn no Cheek pale with conscious Guilt or Sin;
 No *Wall of Brass* like *Innocence* within!
 Say then, my Friend, who merits most applause:
 The *Infant Judgement*, or the penal clause?
 The wiser Boy who calls the knowing² great,
 120 Or *Law*, which rates your *Worth* by your *Estate*?
 Who best advises: he whose venal Song
 Directs to ev'ry *Method*, right or wrong?
 For *Wealth* (no matter whence the rich Man hoards)
 Opens to ev'ry *Pleasure* Life affords –
 Or who superior to proud *Fortune* lives,
 And is the great *Example* which he gives.

But if some Man, or if *all* Men should say,

¹ Member] I.e. member of any exclusive profession or calling; 'your own proper Sphere' (107) seems to confirm that this could be in any field.

² knowing] Perhaps 'shrewd', 'discerning', but in any case not a translation of Horace's *recte*, 'right' (63).

“Plain common Sense should lead us all one Way,
 To fly or follow, to approve or blame,
 130 For fram’d alike, our Taste should be the same” –
 His *Presence* often ask’d, but still deny’d,
 Thus to the *Lion* the sly *Fox* reply’d:
 “I come not, Sir, ’tis true (tho’ I can trace
 A thousand *Footsteps* leading to this place),¹
 Because I strive to find, but search in vain,
 One single *Footstep*, leading back again.”
 He treads not sure, who with the public treads;
 The public is a *Beast* with many *Heads*.
 Whom should I follow, whose Advice pursue,
 140 When each one has his sep’rate Aim in view?
 Some farm the public *Levies*^o at a price, *taxes, duties*
 And some with *Gifts* the *Widow’s Eyes* entice:
 Some bait old *Batchelors*, and presents make,
 And others *Wealth* with sordid *Usury* rake.^o *acquire, amass*
 Yet this were nothing, would they be content;
 But each new Hour they take a diff’rent Bent.
 “Give me on *Richmond Hill*² a Seat”, this cries;
 Behold the momentary^o *Fabric* rise! *instant*
 A new *Whim* takes him for some other place:
 150 Down with the *Walls* – he’ll build on *Epping-Chase*.³
 This sickens, till he tries the married Chain:
 He weds, and wishes he was free again.
 Unmarried – *Wedlock* is the only *Life*;
Married, no *Plague*, like that worst *Plague*, a *Wife*.

¹ *I come ... place*] The syntax makes for difficulty. In the fable the lion is sick, and asks the fox why he does not pay a visit.

² *Richmond Hill*] A peak time for the building of large houses or ‘seats’ on Richmond Hill was the mid-eighteenth century.

³ *Epping-Chase*] Parts of Epping Forest (or Chase), on the Essex border, were enclosed as parkland with large houses from the seventeenth century onwards.

Still inconsistent, fickle to the last –

How shall we bind this *changing Proteus* fast?

But Sir, the *Poor* – the *Poor* are not so bad –

You'd laugh if I should say they're just as mad;

The *Poor* as wanton, and as hard to please,

160 Seek for a change, tho' but in *Bread* and *Cheese*.

The *Barber* pleases not above a Week –

He'll¹ now one *Alehouse*, now another seek –

Now *Islington*, now *Tott'nham Court* invite,

And now a *Sculler*^o is his sole delight.

sculling boat

Behold him there: his sickly Fancy palls,

And like his *Lordship* for new Pleasures calls.

With *Beard* unshav'd, and *Wig* not worth a *Groat*,

With *Shirt* unruffled,^o and embroider'd *Coat*,

lacking ruffles

Should I at *Court*? You laugh, and well you may,

170 But turn the Tables now another Way:

Less of a piece, and with myself at strife,

I change each Hour my ill-weigh'd *Plan of Life*;

Now slight what I pursu'd, and now again,

With *Transport* court what mov'd me with disdain –

Now the square *Fabric* with delight I trace,

And now the lofty *Dome* usurps its place –

With *Pleasure* each vain *Fancy* I pursue,

Uncensur'd, unprov'd, unblam'd by you.

'Tis but a common *Madness*, this, you cry,

180 Nor bid me to *Monroe*² for aid apply.

Is this the Friend? Is this whom we should love?

Who for light Trifles will his Friend reprove,

Yet when his *Faults* as high as *Mountains* rise,

Careless will shut his unobserving Eyes!

¹ *He'll*] 'He' is not the barber, but the poor man, Horace's *pauper*, who changes barbers on a whim.

² *Monroe*] James Monro (1680–1752), a prominent medical specialist in insanity.

But hear me, Friend, whilst in few Words I tell,
 Wherein the wise all other Men excel.
 To *Jove Supreme* alone inferior, he
 Is *wealthy, honourable, beauteous, free,*
 A *King of Kings*, insensible of Pain –
 190 Unless when some curs'd *Rheum*^o offends his *Brain*. *head cold*



Epistle 1.7

Popple arrived in the Bermudas to take up the Govenorship of the islands in 1747. He remained in post until his death in 1763, with an intermission spent in London, 1751-5. We know that he was composing Horatian imitations during the second tour of duty, and probably the first as well. Though the distance is far greater, he can easily ventriloquize Horace on his removal to the country in his reference to 'revisit[ing] his native *Land*' (22).

Horace Book 1st Epistle 7th

Imitated.

Inscrib'd to The R^t Hon.^{ble} The Earl of Granville.¹

Sage *Minister!* Whose *Genius* moves on Springs
 Fit to conduct the *Royal Work* of *Kings*,
 Who, form'd for *Greatness*, can with Ease descend,
 And to the social hour new Spirit lend.

¹ *Earl of Granville*] John Carteret, second earl Granville (1690-1763), was educated at Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford. As a politician he was a Whig, in 1756 declining Newcastle's invitation to become Prime Minister as the alternative to Pitt. He was known for his love of Burgundy and his lavish hospitality.

I told you, tho' at home I chose to stay,
 That choice must to *Necessity* give way.
 You heard my Story, and you let me go;
 Now, why I yet should stay the *Reason* know.
Pow'r is the province of aspiring Man,
 10 And Self the Spring that animates the plan;
 When great Men struggle for supreme command,
 Inferior *Place-men* should at distance stand.
 Who at each *Levee* thrusts his busy Face,
 But tells each Great Man, "Sir, I have a place"?
 Haply, had Absence been his humble Lot,
 The *Place-man* and the place had been forgot.
 Here then, my Lord, expecting smoother Times,
 The *Poet* shall indulge his *Taste* for *Rhymes*,
 Here bear the Summer's Heat and Winter's cold,
 20 And from afar the struggling *Great* behold;
 And when (Heav'n grant it soon) these *Discords* cease,
 Revisit then his native *Land* in peace.

There is a Way, my Lord, of doing good,
 By Men in *Pow'r* but little understood;
 'Tis not the Service done that charms alone,
 But 'tis the manner in the doing shown.
 The *Country Squire* invites his *Friends* to eat,
 And with officious pressing, spoils the *Treat*.
 "Pray taste these *Pears* – true *Burrés*,¹ on my word,
 30 The Country round no better can afford. "
 "Sir, I have din'd, and beg to be excused" –
 "Nay faith you shall, I will not be refus'd."
 His awkward *Kindness* still persists to tease:

¹ Burrés] Reference sources must be wrong to suggest the Beurré or Bosc pear does not date back beyond the early nineteenth century, but this might mean it was a rarity in Popple's time.

“Your Children, Sir, may like such *Pears* as these;
Your *Pockets* fill, no *Ceremony*, pray –
The *Hogs* will have them when they take away.”¹

Thus *Prodigals* and *Fools* their *Gifts* confer,
And, right in *Principle*, in *Practice* err;
Mere *Ostentation* never made a Friend:
40 The *Vanity* of giving is the *End*.
Who gives thro’ *Pride*, or without *Taste* bestows,
But^o asks a sordid *Debt* which *Flatt’ry* owes. *merely*
Above the mean *Applause* which such pursue,
The good and wise have only worth in view;
And yet with these the *Maxim* too will hold,
They know a *Counter*^o from a Piece of *Gold*. *debased coin*
For this be *Granville* ever dear to *Fame*,
And let *Posterity* revere his *Name*.
But if, my Lord, your gen’rous Care extends
50 To wish me well and happy with my Friends,
Restore (what Time has now almost destroy’d)
The noble *Stamina*^o I once enjoy’d; *vigour*
The dark brown Hair, that o’er my Forehead hung,
The graceful Smile and the seducing Tongue,
The pow’r in Verse of *Beauty* to complain –
Their *Pride*, *Perverseness*, *Coldness* and *Disdain*.
A *Fox* one Day had crept into a Fold,
The Creature cramm’d^o till he no more could hold; *gorged*
His Hunger satisfied, he strove in vain,
60 Thro’ the same op’ning to return again.
A *Weasel* saw, and laugh’d at his Distress:
“Stay”, cry’d the *Reptile*,² “till your Belly’s less;
Discharge your load, or wait till you grow thin,

¹ *when ... away*] ‘When the table is cleared’ (*OED*, ‘to take away’, 2).

² *Reptile*] The word formerly denoted any creeping or crawling animal.

The hole will let you out, that let you in.”

If some such *Reptile*, with less Truth than Wit,

Should say this *Apologue*^o my Case will hit,

moral fable

Rather than own the Charge, I would resign,

And give up freely all that I call mine.

I hate the Man who, when rich *Dainties* cloy,

70 Commends the frugal *Meat* the *Poor* enjoy.

Freedom of Mind, and independent Ease,

Beyond *Arabia*'s *Wealth* have *Charms* to please.

In me perhaps such boasting may offend,

Who ever did and ever must depend;^o

be dependent

Yet if *plain Truth* may without *Crime* be told,

I never was thought confident or bold;

Free to acknowledge what the *Great* bestow'd,

I publish'd ev'ry where the *Debt* I ow'd;

No *foolish Pride*, no *Vanity of worth*,

80 To any unbecoming *Thought* gave birth:

From my own *Merit* I no Colour drew,

But took it as a *Gift* from them and you.

Prouder to be oblig'd than to deserve,

My Thoughts from this were never known to swerve;

Nay, had the greatest *Fortune* been my Lot,

The gen'rous *Patron* had not been forgot.

Now, why I say I could resign, attend,

And let *Telemachus* my Cause defend.¹

“Take back your Stud of Horses”, he reply'd,

90 “Our *Ithaca* is not with *Grass* supply'd;

Our *Plains* are small, our *Pasture* is not good,

The gen'rous^o *Beasts* would starve for want of Food;

well-bred

Such Things, great *Menelaus*, to you belong:

¹ *And ... defend]* Alludes to an offer Menelaus made to Telemachus of a Set of Horses (ms note).

For me to take such *Presents* would be wrong.”
 Small *Gifts*, my Lord, become the humble Man;
 A mod’rate *Competence* is all my *Plan*.
Splendour and *Pomp* ambitious *Minds* may please;
 Give me a Life of *Indolence* and *Ease*.
 Nor is this Sentiment so strange or new,
 100 Who reads *Mankind* will mostly find it true.
 Philip of *Rome*, renown’d for Feats of *War*,
 And eminently skilful at the *Bar*,
 Returning Home one Day quite tir’d and spent,
 And on the Distance of the Way intent,
 Beheld a Fellow hanging o’er the Rails,
 And paring at a *Barber’s Shop* his *Nails*;
 The Object struck^o – and calling to his *Boy*, *made an impression*
 “Go learn (cried he) what is that Man’s employ;
 Enquire his *Name*, his *Family*, his *Friends*,
 110 And what he has to spend, and what he spends.”
 The Boy returns – “*Vulteius* is his Name,
 Slender his means, his *Conduct* without blame;
 A *Crier’s Post* the best that he has yet –
 A good *Æconomist*,^o and out of *Debt*. *housekeeper*
 He has his hours for work, and hours for play,
 Knows when to save and when to live away;^o *be extravagant*
 A Friend or two, and of his own Degree,
 Is all the *Company* he likes to see;
 Sometimes a *Play*, sometimes an Ev’ning *Walk*,
 120 An hour of *Exercise* and friendly Talk.
 This is the Man.” – “A strange one”, *Philip* cries;
 “Bid him to *Supper*.” – “Sir, the Man denies.”
 “Denies?” – “Yes, Sir, he begs to be excus’d,
 And that’s the same as if he had refus’d.”
 Next Day returning thro’ the Market place,
Philip perceiv’d our *Crier’s* busy Face,
 Accosts him first, and asks him how he does,

And how the bus'ness of his calling goes.
Vulteius blush'd and made an awkward leg^o – *bow*
 130 “Your *Honour's* Pardon, Sir, I humbly beg;
 Poor Folks that work for Bread are much confin'd,
 Your Honour was indeed exceeding kind.”
 “Well! Say no more – 'tis past – but come at Night;
 One hour of chat will set all Matters right.”
Vulteius came. His Appetite was good,
 He eat and drank as much as e'er he could;
 Said ev'ry thing that came into his Head,
 And found at last 'twas Time to go to Bed;
 Next Day return'd – return'd again the Third,
 140 And ev'ry Day grew better than his Word.
Vulteius now was listed with the rest,
 An early Client, and a constant Guest.
Philip perceiving how he took the Bait,
 Propos'd a Visit to a small *Estate*;
 Honest *Vulteius* readily agreed.
 Behold him now upon a prancing Steed,
 Riding about – and without Taste or Wit,
 Praising each Object that his Fancy hit.
Philip observ'd it all, and, pleas'd to find
 150 How much he had already turn'd his mind
 (For *Philip* lov'd to live in mirth and ease,
 And would at all Events his Humour please),
 Advis'd a purchase of a Piece of Land,
 And paid the *Money* for him out of hand.
 To make all short, a *Countryman* become,
Vulteius now forgot the *Sweets*^o of *Rome*; *pleasures*
Farming and *Husbandry* his only Care,
 And how to make his *Vines* and *Fig-Trees* bear;
 Intent on this he spar'd not cost nor pain,
 160 And wore himself quite out with Thirst of gain.
 But when he found, in spite of all his Toil,

That sudden *Blights* his growing *Crops* would spoil,
 That, take what pains he would, he could not keep
 From *Robbers* and from *Wolves* his *Goats* and *Sheep*;
 That his spent *Oxen* died beneath the *Plough*,
 And all his *Hopes* were cross'd, he knew not how –
 Enrag'd and mad, to give his *Passion* vent,
 He took his *Horse*, and to his *Patron's* went.
Philip beheld his *Client* with surprise,
 170 And scarcely could give *Credit* to his *Eyes*.
 “You work too much, my *Friend*; you live too hard –
 A *Man* should to himself shew some regard –
 Too much *Attention* to concerns of *Wealth*
 Destroys the greatest of all *Blessings*, *Health*.”
 “Talk not of health or wealth”, *Vulteius* cried;
 “Both I possess'd before your *Schemes* I tried.
 Convinc'd at last how much I am to blame,
 Call me a *Wretch*, for 'tis my proper *Name*;
 Yet if you would my peace of *Mind* restore,
 180 Return me to the *Life* I led before.”

Let him who finds his former *State* were best,
 Revolve our *Crier's* *Conduct* in his *Breast*;
 And if he would no longer live in pain,
 Return in time, and take it up again.
 For he will ever be esteem'd most wise
 Who suits his *Measure*^o to his *Shape* and *Size*.

portion



Epistle 1.16

Popple's strengths as a poet of abstract moral argument are in evidence here, with such material only a little diluted and diversified by sketches of concrete examples. This epistle is also given much life and variety by his clever and varied use of direct speech, whether put

into the mouth of his interlocutor, his imagined servant, or the Euripidean drama characters at the end.

Horace Book 1st Epistle 16th

Imitated.

Inscrib'd to John Pownall Esq.¹

What Grains my Lands produce, what Seeds I sow,
 Whether the *Grape* or *Olive* better grow,
 What *Herds* or *Flocks* upon my *Pastures* feed,
 Or if I raise up *Stock*, or *Poultry* breed,
 You want to know. To answer what you ask
 Would be a pleasing, but laborious Task;
 Take, then, a short description of the place,
 And let plain *Truth* supply the want of grace.

Continu'd *Mountains* rise on ev'ry Side,
 10 Which deep'ning *Vallies* intermix'd divide;
 Wild and irregular the *Vallies* run,
 Yet not impervious to the cheering *Sun*.
 The *Health* accompany'd with length of *Days*,
 Defies the *Winter's* blasts or *Summer's* rays;
 So rich the Clime, so nourishing the Air,
Trees spring from *Rocks*, and without *Culture* bear;
Prickles^o unknown to you, with Fruits abound, *prickly plants*
 And *Limes* and *Oranges* o'erspread the *Ground*;
 Large show'rs of *Rain* from bounteous *Heav'n* descend,
 20 And shade for Man and beast green *Cedars* lend.
 Around, in awful State old *Ocean* roars,

¹ *John Pownall Esq.*] John Pownall (1720-1795), Clerk to the Board of Trade 1741-5, Solicitor and Clerk of Reports (and Popple's successor) 1745-53, naval officer in Jamaica 1755-71, later a Member of Parliament.

And thro' dark passages his *Waters* pours,
 Which springing upwards thro' the porous earth
 To large *Canals* and beauteous *Sounds* give birth.
 Here, without sickness, were his *Mind* at ease,
 Your banish'd Friend might live out *Nature's Lease*,
 Till slow-pac'd *Time*, that brings on all decay,
 Shall eat his vital *Principle* away.

In point of *Happiness* we grossly err,
 30 Who to our own *another's Sense* prefer;
 The talking *World* may call us what it will:
 The conscious *Mind* is the *Criterion* still.
 Who credits *Fame*, this *Apothegm* denies,
 That none are happy but the good and wise.
 The sick Man thus his flatt'ring Friends believes,
 And spite of all he feels, himself deceives;
 Cold sweats at last attack him at his *Meat*,
 He dies, that thought he but sat down to eat;
 False Shame makes Fools their Feelings thus conceal,
 40 Till 'tis too late the dang'rous *Sore* to heal.

Suppose some Fool, in complimentary Strain,
 Should on your easy nature strive to gain,^o *prevail*
 And with *Hyperboles* that might offend
 The *Modesty* of *Kings*, your *Fame* extend,
 Ascribing *Victories* by *Land* and *Sea*,
 Where 'twas impossible for you to be.
 You'd scorn the *Flatt'rer* and the *Flatt'ry* too,
 And give to *Cæsar*, what is *Cæsar's* due.
 But should this Man your private *Virtues* praise,
 50 Would you not credit ev'ry *Word* he says?
 "I would (you say), within my reach it lies –
 Who would not be reputed good and wise?"
 But if he should his former speech disclaim,
 Would you give up your *Title* to the *Name*?
 Would you like patient *Ministers* resign,

And the fair *Character* he gave, decline?

'Tis hard, you say, but yet it must be so,

For he can take away, who can bestow.

But let us now another Question state,

60 And try if arguments like these have weight.

The People, fond of *Scandal* in all Times,

Asperse^o me with the most flagitious *Crimes*;

charge

Pronounce me thief, nay murth'rer, if you will –

A Man that would his aged *Parent* kill –

Shall I be hurt? Shall I change *Colour* here?

Not if my *Conscience* tells me I am clear.

False Titles please, who^o have no worth to boast,

those who

And he that lies himself, fears Liars most.

The Man of *Rectitude* and *Truth* defies

70 The Fool that flatters, and the *Rogue* that lies.

Whom shall we then the man of *Virtue* call?

Or is there no such *Character* at all?

He has (no doubt you'll say) the best pretence,

Who squares^o his Actions by the *Rules* of *Sense*;

regulates

Who pays *Obedience* to his *Country's Laws*,

And stirs himself in ev'ry honest Cause;

Whom love of *Equity* to all endears,

And ev'ry good Man loves, and bad Man fears.

But ask his *Neighbours*, those who know him best,

80 If this Man's *Character* will stand the test;

They'll tell you, and maintain it to his Face,

That all his *Sanctity*^o is but *Grimace*.^o

saintliness ... pretence

“I have not robb'd you Sir”, my Servant cries;

“The *Proof* lies here: who robs his *Master* flies.”

“The *Proof* is strong, my Friend, and shall prevail:

Take your *Reward*, you shall not go to Jail” –

“I have not murder'd any one” – “'Tis true,

The triple Tree^o shall wait a while for you” –

gallows

“Sir – I am just and honest” – “So you say,

- 90 And so perhaps, for aught I know you may;
 But are *Wolves* honest who their *Prey* forbear,
 Or *Hawks*, or *Kites* because they fear the *Snare*?
 That Man alone is good who dreads to Sin
 From *Principles* of *Virtue* fix'd within;
 The penal Law alone makes you refrain,
 Honest thro' *Fear*, but still a *Rogue* in grain;^o *ingrained*
 For tho' 'tis but the thousandth part you steal,
 And tho' the loss is trifling that I feel,
 In Equity^o the *Crime* would be as great *jurisprudence*
- 100 To steal a *Part* as take my whole *Estate*.”
 See the mask'd *Hypocrite*, whose *Presence* awes,
 The great *Observer* of his *Country's* Laws –
 The sure protector when the *Poor* draw near,
 Whose Judgements all our *Courts* of *Law* revere –
 Behold him kneeling, while aloud he cries:
 “Grant my request, great *God*, before I rise.”
 Then mutt'ring to himself, in lower tone,
 He whispers thus – “Still be my *Crimes* unknown!
 Still may I cheat, still just and holy seem,
- 110 And live unblemish'd in the *World's* esteem;
 Throw *Clouds*, great *God*, betwixt the *World* and me,
 That none my secret *Villanies* may see.”
 The *Slave* condemn'd in *Servitude* to live,
 Would ev'ry thing to purchase *Freedom* give;
 But he's a genuine *Slave* without allay,
 Whom *Avarice* or other *Passions* sway.
 Who wishes, fears; who fears, can never be
 In any Sense of *Independence* free.
 Who studies nothing but to heap up Gold,
- 120 Deserts the post of *Virtue*, and is sold;
 He throws his *Arms* away, his best *Defence*,
 And lives abhorr'd of ev'ry Man of Sense.
 No Slave so vile, but hath some Value still;

What Man the worst of Slaves would choose to kill?
 Means to employ them usefully are found:
 They tend the *Cattle*, or they till the *Ground*,
 They go to Sea; their labour is your gain,
 Or you may sell them without further pain.
 But *Misers*, and all those whom *Passion* rules,
 130 Are worse than Slaves, for they are Slaves and Fools.

In short, my Friend, whatever be our Lot,
 This speech of *Bacchus* should not be forgot;
 'Tis what each Man of *Virtue*, tho' deprest,
 Should always harbour in his constant breast.

B: *Ruler of Thebes* (said he),¹ your Pow'r I know;
 What greater wrongs must I still undergo!

P: I'll take your *Wealth* away – I'll leave you bare.

B: Take it, great *King*, it is beneath my Care.

P: Loaded with *Chains*, in *Dungeons* you shall lie,
 140 Nor shall you have it in your pow'r to fly.

B: Some God will set me free when e'er I please,
 And frustrate, *Tyrant*, your unjust *Decrees*.

This meaning was by his own hands to fall –
 For *Death*, dear *Pownall*, is the End of all.



Epistle 1.17

As many of the notes to the present selection of imitations themselves imply, eighteenth-century England was without doubt a great age of patronage. Though he does not reference

¹ (*said he*)] Taken from a play of Euripides (ms note) – the play being *The Bacchae*, though Pople does not manage as vivid or dramatic an adaptation as Horace.

any personal stake in this system as Horace had, this is a world with which Popple was intimately familiar. Plainly, he is at home with this subject.

Horace Book 1st Epistle 17th

Imitated.

Inscrib'd To The Right Hon:^{ble} S:^r Thomas Robinson¹ K:^t of the Bath.

Tho' safe in your great Knowledge of Mankind,
 You want no *Counsellor* to guide your mind;
 Tho' none to public Life, however bred,
 The paths of *Greatness* better knows to tread;
 Tho' I, who now would teach, might learn from you,
 To fix the bounds, and pay the *Great* their due;
 Yet hear (and think a blind Man shows the way),
 What your well-meaning Friend presumes to say:
 Adopt the *Precept*, if you think it right,

10 Nor the *Advice* for the *Adviser* slight.

If Ease and Quiet are the Mind's best choice,
 And Reason gives the *Sanction* of her voice;
 If all the noble *Toil* of active *Life*
 Is but one Scene of *Servitude* and *Strife*;
 From *Kings*, from *Courts*, from *Ministers* remove,

¹ *Robinson*] Thomas Robinson (1695-1770) was Secretary to the Paris Embassy, 1724-30, where he and Popple would have worked together, since Popple was acting as a secretary to Horatio Walpole when Walpole was appointed ambassador-extraordinary there in 1724. Robinson's lifelong patron Thomas Pelham, later Duke of Newcastle, was two years his senior at Westminster School. In later life he was associated with the Board of Trade in 1648-9, sat in the Commons 1749-61, was its ineffectual leader 1754-5, and was created first baron Grantham in 1761.

And sacred *Solitude* with her, approve;
 For *Pleasures* are not to the *Rich* alone,
 Nor lives he ill, who lives thro' Life unknown.
 But if (for *Nature* is in all the same)
 20 Your *Children's* Care your fond *Affection* claim;
 If for their sakes, or for your *Friends'* you live,
 Or to yourself would more *Indulgence* give;
 In the gay *Circle* of the *Great* remain,
 And what to *Parts*^o was giv'n, with *Parts* sustain. *abilities, gifts*
 In private Life 'tis *Virtue* to excel,
 But he acts best, who acts thro' all Life well.
 To *Aristippus* once the *Cynic* said,
 "Who would court *Kings*, who could with Herbs be fed?"
 To him the gay *Philosopher* reply'd,
 30 "Who could, would not so poorly be supply'd."
 Say which (for both their Sense have well exprest),
 Or rather hear, why I think this the best:
 For thus, 'tis said, his *Raillery* he broke,^o *demolished*
 And turn'd upon him his own currish^o Joke. *low*
 "We both are *Beggars, Fools, Buffoons*, 'tis true,
 I for myself, but for the People, you;
 I court the *King*, his *Revenue* is mine,
 His *Horse* I ride, at his *Expense* I dine;
 To me more *Honour*, and more *Profit* springs.
 40 But you (you say) ask but for trifling Things;
 What then! Does more or less the diff^rence make?
 Less still than Those who give, are Those who take.
 Few Things, *Diogenes*, your wants supply,
 Yet wanting these, you want as much as I:
 To be oblig'd is to put on the Chain,
 And all your boasted *Freedom* is but vain."
 Such *Aristippus* was; in him you see
 What ev'ry Man in ev'ry *State* should be;
 For ev'ry *State of Life* became his plan.

50 His plan: to be the same contented Man –
 At great things aiming, yet well pleas'd with small,
 All things to him alike, and he to all.

Not so the Man, whom abject thoughts possess,
 Who wanting little, covets to want less;
 Who thinks himself to private *Virtues* born,
 And shuns alike the *great Man's* praise, or scorn;
 Who throws his *Vest* off as superfluous Pride,
 Yet doubles twice his *Cloak* about his Side;
 Should he turn *Courtier* 'twould be strange indeed,

60 But stranger still, should he at *Court* succeed!
 The first whose *Genius* forms him for the State,
 Waits not the robe of Favour to be great.
 More drest in Parts,^o than in brocade or lace,
 Sustaining ev'ry *Character* with grace;
 Fearless he goes, where'er the great resort,
 Not more himself at home, than when at *Court*.

abilities

Whilst, worse than pois'nous Snakes who basking lie,
 Or Dogs run mad, whom fools and wise Men fly,
 The *Cynic Coxcomb* proffer'd greatness shuns,
 70 And from it with *Precipitation* runs;
 "Give me my *Cloak*, and take your *Cloth of Gold*" –
 Give him his *Rags*, or he will die with cold;
 Unfit to live at *Court*, or learn at *School*,
 Leave him, and set him down both mad and fool.

In *Peace* or *War*, who gains the noblest prize
 Touches *Jove's* threshold, and attempts the Skies;
 To please such Men is no small Share of Praise,
 To please such Men is our own wealth to raise.
 "All this is true, all this we feel and know,

80 But ev'ry Man cannot to *Corinth* go:¹
 Doubting Success, 'tis prudent to decline;
 The praise of *Modesty* at least is mine."
 The praise of *Modesty* is yours indeed,
 But what is his, who labours to succeed?
 For here the *Truth* must lie, or no where can.
 By this their sep'rate *Merits* we must scan;
 One bears the Load, the other throws it down:
 Is there a doubt who merits most renown?
 Or° *Virtue* is indeed an empty *Name*, *either*

90 Or he who tries, exceeds the rest in *Fame*.
 The Man who loudly of his wants complains,
 Less from the *Great* than silent *Merit* gains.
 When *Wants* and *Talents* both alike are known,
 Why take by *Storm*, what must be soon our own?
 To seize by force, or modestly to take,
 Is the essential *Diff'rence Truth* must make.
 In this *Preferment's* true *Criterion* lies,
 Who forces *may*, who still goes on *must* rise.

The clam'rous Fool who to his *Patron* goes,
 100 And stuns his Ears thus, with his private *Woes* –
 "My Sister has no *Fortune* – who will wed?
 My Mother too in her old Age, wants bread;
 I have a Farm, but 'tis a little out: *in debt*
 'Twill neither sell, nor bring the year about."²
 Ask but for *Alms*, like *Beggars* in the Streets,
 And the same Fate too with the *Beggars* meets;
 For lo! a second comes and tells his Tale,
 And hopes with the kind *Patron* to prevail;

¹ *But ... go*] This line is a direct translation of Horace's, in which a Greek proverb about reaching Corinth is applied to the difficulty of achieving true virtue.

² *bring ... about*] 'get [me] through the year'.

Who, tir'd, divides what he must give away,
 110 And leaves the *Beggars* scrambling for their *Prey*.
 So the dull *Crow*, who caws aloud to see
 The rotten *Carrion* from the neighbouring tree,
 Draws with her chatt'ring Noise the rav'nous Crew,
 Who eat her Share, and quarrel with her too.
 Great tho' our wants, would we with *Silence* crave,
 More food, and much less *envy*, we should have.
 Detach'd from bus'ness, and to mirth inclin'd,
 Willing to dissipate a loaded mind,
 Great Men will sometimes short excursions make,
 120 And, to amuse them, some *Companion* take.
 In these gay parties, *Pleasure* is the aim,
 The great and little Man, are just the same;
Distinction thrown aside, 'tis equal Joy,
 'Tis who shall best the *present Hour* employ!
 Should *This*, mistaking his true *Office* here,
 With his own *Story* tease his *Patron's* Ear;
 "Here I was robb'd – and in this place o'erturn'd;¹
 Here the Cold pinch'd me – here the Weather burn'd" –
 Or feign some Losses which he ne'er endur'd,
 130 In hopes some future *Suff'rings* might be cur'd;
 Like artful Girls who for feign'd *Losses* cry,
 That their true wants their *Lovers* may supply.
 You'd laugh – but when he opens^o his true case, *explains*
 Would scarcely give the lying Fool a place.
 The noted *Cheat* thus, with his dismal groans,
 Complains in vain of dislocated bones;
 The *Passenger* whom once he could deceive,
 The present *Anguish* will not now believe.
Vainly the *Wretch* implores, for Mercy's sake,

¹ *o'erturn'd*] I.e. in a coach.

140 You would for once some small Compassion take:
 “Go seek some stranger”, the hoarse neighbours roar;
 “Your tricks are known, and we believe no more.”



Epistle 1.19

Popple is forced to part company with his original at times here. He is unable to boast, like Horace, of innovation as a poet; nor does he lay claim to an array of predecessors, concentrating instead on one. Popple’s tribute to Pope as a satirist at 43ff. is a differently inflected and shorter version of the praise accorded him, and the contrasting dispraise of other contemporary satirists, in Popple’s imitation of Horace’s Satire 1.10.¹

Horace Book 1st Epistle 19th

Imitated.

Inscrib’d to Richard Edgumbe Esq.²

If *ancient Writers* merit our regard,
 No Water Drinker ever made a *Bard*;
 Perus’d with labour, and forgot with ease,
 Their Works (they say) can neither last, nor please.
 But since great *Bacchus* gave the *Grape* to flow,
 And taught the *Rhyming Tribe* its use to know,
 The potent *Juice* enrich’d their frozen *Veins*,

¹ First printed in 2007: *T&L* 16, 219-24.

² *Richard Edgumbe Esq.*] The Hon. Richard Edgumbe (1716-1761), wit, inveterate gambler, and (like nearly all Popple’s contacts) Whig, was a Member of Parliament 1742-58, and in the 1750s held a sequence of posts at the Board of Trade, the Admiralty, and as Comptroller of the Household. He has no obvious connection with the subjects of this epistle.

And added Strength and Sweetness to their Strains.
 Read *Homer's* Verse – he never talks of *Wine*,
 10 But 'tis μεληδές, or *Divine*;
 And *Ennius* too, who made fierce *Heroes* fight,
 Never began, till flush'd with *Wine*, to *Write*.
 Hence then, ye cold, aquatic, sober fools,
 Go plead in *Courts*, or dogmatize in *Schools*;
 Leave *Verse* to those who love to wet their clay,^o *to drink*
 To drink all *Night*, and smell of *Wine* all day.
 'Tis granted, Sir – *Wine* may the *Bard* inspire,
 But *Genius* gives the true *Poetic* fire.
 Struck with the *Talents* which in *Pitt*¹ are seen,
 20 I can put on his awkward gait and mien;
 But let us now the matter fairly scan,
 Have I for this the *Virtues* of the Man?
 With strength of *Argument* and pointed *Wit*,
*Murray*² each *Orator's* weak Parts can hit;
 Proud to be thought well-bred, and yet severe,
 To speak short *Satire* and not wound the Ear.
H—³ rises up, grows warm, forgets his cue,
 30 And loses both himself and Object too.
 Originals, where ev'ry thing is great,
 Deceive us, when we strive to reach their height;
 We feel the *Character*, we own it strong,
 But the *Misfortune* is, we copy wrong;
 And if the smallest *Likeness* is exprest,

¹ Pitt] Pitt the Elder (1708-1778), whose most famous talent was his brilliant oratory.

² Murray] William Murray, first Earl of Mansfield (1705-1793), the famous judge, politician, and Lord Chief Justice. The addressee of Pope's imitation of Horace Epistle 1.6 (1738), and celebrated in his version of Ode 4.1 (1737).

³ H—] An unidentified parliamentarian.

Self-Love and *Vanity* supply the rest,
 For 'tis the servile *Imitator's*, still
 To copy *Models*, tho' he copy ill.
 But greater *Follies* still infect their *Brain*,
 40 They will not leave us ev'n corporeal pain –
Pope's head would ache, each petty *Wit* would cry,
 “Poor *Pope*, if thou feel'st half so much as I!”
 Peace to thy sacred *Dust*, immortal *Shade*;
 Be ev'ry *Honour* to thy merit paid!
 Still bloom the *Muses'* Laurel on thy brow,
 Unmatch'd alive, inimitable now;
 Be thine the *Glory* to have taught the *Muse*
Satiric Arms with bitterness to use,
 While ev'ry *Great Man*, trembling at thy nod,
 50 Would court the *Poet* to escape the *Rod*.
 Be mine, and let me equal *Honours* claim,
 To write like thee, but not like thee defame;
 Let W—¹ copy what in thee is bad,
 And set down *Marlb'rough* military-mad,²
 Abuse each *Peer*, and satirize his *King*,

¹ W—] Paul Whitehead, whose poem *Manners: A Satire* was printed in 1739. Ms notes to lines 54, 57-8, and 63 refer the reader to this work. Whitehead's poem, like Popple's, concerns itself in part with the model afforded for satire by the work of Pope, but it also scandalized the House of Lords sufficiently (through the content Popple goes on to mention) for its publisher, Robert Dodsley, to be briefly imprisoned.

² set ... mad] In Whitehead's *Manners* the first duke of Marlborough, the hero of Blenheim, is portrayed in later life as a 'lost peer' who became unpopular because he 'ran military mad', 'misled' by the idea that 'Men of Honour must be cloth'd in red' (pp. 14-15).

And like a *Newgate-bird*¹ in prison sing –
 “*Than Crowns, ye Gods, be any Fate my doom,
 Or any Dungeon but a Drawing Room*”.²

Be this call’d *Satire* – wear, great *Bard*, the *Crown* –
 60 Reign, reign – we are too wise to hang or drown;
Archilochus his Days are now no more,
 My Lord and Lady laugh at *Rogue* and *Whore*;
York unites to hear the Bard lament with Grief
 That *Law*, while yet he breathes, should want a chief:
 From such attempts let me no Honour gain:
 ’Tis *Malice* and not *Satire* thus to stain.
 Be this my boast, as it has been my Rule,
 To lash the *Folly*, but to spare the *Fool*.
 Single in this, I ask no other praise
 70 Than what each candid *Critic* fairly pays;
 ’Tis praise enough for me to please the few:
 The *public* oft bestows it when not due.
 But would you know why some condemn abroad,
 Who in their *Closets* privately applaud,
 And when my *Satires* steal upon the Town,
 Affect with eagerness to cry them down?
 I never herded with the scribbling Tribe,
 Nor for their favour would *Reviewers* bribe;
 I never in *Hedge-Ale-houses*³ would dine,
 80 To hear their *Works*, or punish them with mine.
 If ask’d to read, excuses still I fram’d:
 “Mere trifles, mine – not worthy to be nam’d.”

¹ *Newgate-bird*] *Newgate* was London’s oldest prison, its dungeons notoriously vile.

² *Than Crowns ... Room*] Whitehead, *Manners* (London, 1739), p. 4. Either there is a copying error, or Popple is quoting from memory: ‘fate’ should be ‘State’.

³ *Hedge-Ale-houses*] I.e. small, obscure ale-houses.

Hence piqued, that I should set my self above
 The Consequences of their hate, or love,
 They cry, “This *Modesty* is out of place,
 ’Tis but an artful *Copy* of his *Face*;
 I know his *Vanity*: no vulgar Ear
 Must be admitted such high strains to hear.”

I take the *Sneer*, and, fearful to engage,
 90 Am glad without a blow to quit the Stage;
 For *Sneer* produces *Anger*, *Anger Strife*,
 And *Strife*, poetic *Bilingsgate*¹ for *Life*.



Epistle 1.20

Popple feels free to imitate Horace’s playful poem playfully, for example in exchanging the Latin poet-persona’s closing specification of his age for a coy refusal to give one. Given that Popple wears a full wig in the only known portrait of him (an early family group by Hogarth, 1730), it is not possible to be sure whether he was, as Horace reports himself in a description exaggerated by Popple (line 50), grey before his time, but compare Popple’s Epistle 1.7.53, above.

Horace Book 1st Epistle 20th

Imitated.

The Poet to his Book

Impatient to be still confin’d by me,

¹ Bilingsgate] So strongly was London’s fishmarket at Billingsgate associated with abusive language that the word came to mean ‘scurrilous vituperation’: ‘the constant billingsgate poured on them’ (*OED* 2, cit. 1799).

Your only thought is how you may get free;¹
 By *Millar*,² or by *Dodsley*'s³ hands made fine,
 What Joy 'twould be, in either Shop to shine!
 You hate the lock and key, *Youth*'s safest guard,
 And mour⟨n⟩ your fate of *Liberty* debarr'd;
 Displeas'd that but a few your merits know,
 You fret and sigh, and long at large to go.

Better instructed – yet indulge your Vein:°

humour

- 10 Once gone, you never can return again.
 “What have I done? What wish'd for?” soon you'll cry,
 When scowl'd upon by some dark *Critic*'s Eye;
 Blind *Wretch*, you knew that I who lov'd you best,
 When tir'd, would read a page, and skip the rest;
 What then from other Men could you expect
 But scorn or envy, or at best neglect?
 Yet if, too sensible of your *Offence*,
 My *Anger* robs me not of common *Sense*,
 This I will say, and this you'll find is true:
- 20 You may be lik'd so long as you are *new*.
 But when the grace of *Novelty* is past,
 And for *waste paper* in some hole you're cast,
 A package of dry *Goods*, you'll be convey'd

¹ *Your ... free*] Horace/Popple addresses his first Book of Epistles, now ready for publication, as if it were a young slave eager to quit his master's house.

² *Millar*] The bookseller Andrew Millar, who brought out Thomson's *Seasons* and other prominent literary works, had a shop in the Strand from about 1729.

³ *Dodsley*'s] Robert Dodsley (1704-1764) was one of the foremost booksellers (publishers) of his day.

50 And was quite grey, when not quite Twenty one;
That he was *Choleric*, yet soon appeas'd,
And rather of a *Temper* to be pleas'd.

But if some curious *Fool* should ask his age,
Tell him the *Rats* have gnaw'd away the page.



Epistle 2.2

At 216 lines, Horace's Epistle 2.2 is a long text, but Popple's at 380 is much longer. In the manuscript volume, the blank spaces on the Latin side of the opening are a visual indication of Popple's digressive tendencies, pronounced, for example, in his account of his early manhood, 71-100.

Horace Book 2^d Epistle 2^d

Inscrib'd

To Thomas Hill Esq.¹

Friend of the Great in their unbended Hours

Dear *Hill!* on whom each Blessing *Fortune* pours!

A Father, willing to promote his Son,

Brings you the Lad, and thinks his *Business* done;

“Make him your Clerk, Sir – He can write and spell;

Seek where you will, you'll not be match'd so well –

The Mother-Tongue he knows – nay, he can speak

¹ *Thomas Hill Esq.*] Hill (1682/3-1758), presented as a ‘genius’ in Popple's version of Horace Satire 2.2.525, was another product of Westminster School. He enjoyed a public career of some distinction, becoming a member of the Royal Society in 1726. He succeeded Popple's brother Alured as Secretary to the Board of Trade and Plantations in 1737. He was known as a poet in both Latin and English.

A kind of *Linguo* which might pass for *Greek* –
 The Voice is good, tho' he no Music knows,
 10 As full of Melody as *Beard's* or *Lowe's*.¹
 Docile in all things, studious still to please,
 Like very clay, you mould him at your Ease –
 I praise him not as if a *Burthen* grown,
 Tho' poor, my own, thank *God*, is still my own.
 What's twenty pounds a year for such a Boy?
 Take him, and as you find him fit, employ.
 One *Fault* indeed he has: the Boy loves play;
 And once for fear of whipping ran away –
 All Boys are so. If you with that can bear,
 20 You'll find him well deserving of your care.”
 You take the Boy – He bids you soon adieu –
 Why will you blame his *Father*? He spake true:
 You know his Faults – the case is very plain;
 You cannot justly send him back again.

Now mark, what I deduce from this short *Tale*,
 And let strict *Justice* hold an even Scale;
 I told you, Sir (a Truth which each Friend knows)
 That I would never write, unless in *Prose*;
 That each gay *Muse*, when happy, my Delight,
 30 I now had fairly banish'd from my Sight;
 That *Business* only should engross my Time,
 And not one single hour be left for *Rhyme*.
 But what avails it to have spoke my Mind,
 Since still you think my *Silence* is unkind;
 Nay more, complain, and tax me with *Neglect*,
 That I don't send the *Verses* you expect.

A *Soldier* once, with labour and hard Toil,

¹ Beard's or Lowe's] John Beard (c.1716-1791), operatic tenor and a favourite of his day;

Thomas Lowe (c.1719-1783), tenor and actor.

Had gain'd a little comfortable Spoil;
 And, what in *Soldiers* one but seldom sees,
 40 Had kept it to retire, and live at Ease.
 Sleeping one Night, he was of all bereft;
 The Wretch had not one single farthing left.
 Vex'd at his Loss, and mad with all Mankind,
 Despair inspir'd him with a *Hero's* Mind;
 No *Party* could go out, but he would go,
 For ever in the *thickest* of the *Foe*,
 In ev'ry *Danger* first. To cut all short,
 He storm'd and took a well-defended *Fort*;
 His *Recompense* was great, his *Honour* more,
 50 Richer by far than what he was before.
 His *Gen'ral*, pleas'd, his noble *Ardour* prais'd
 And much above his hopes the *Warrior* rais'd.
 Another *Enterprize* was now in view:
 "Come, Friend, this *Action* is reserv'd for you –
 'Tis yours the *Path* of *Honour* still to tread"
 (A *Coward* had been mov'd with what he said)
 "Go where your *Virtue* calls – Riches and Fame,
Virtue's Reward, shall eternize your Name."
 The *Soldier*, tho' a plain and common Man,
 60 Just wise enough, the worth of Life to scan,
 Turn'd to his *Gen'ral* and thus slyly said,
 "I thank you, Sir – my *Fortune* now is made.
 Go they who lose, or have no *Purse* to save –
Despair and *Poverty* make *Cowards* brave."
 'Tis so with me: thanks to my Parents' Care,
 Of Education I can boast some share;
 And tho' not half so learn'd as *Pope* in *Greek*,
 Can tell as well how *Homer's Heroes* speak;
 What fatal Havoc fierce *Achilles* made,
 70 How dear each *Grecian* for his Anger paid!
 A little *Learning*, which I brought from School,

Taught me of *Right* and *Wrong*, to know the Rule;
 By that led on, *Philosophy* I read,
 And know as much as if at *Oxford* bred –
 For *Truth* divested of its learned *Mask*,
 To studious *Minds*, becomes an easy *Task*.
 But soon these tasted *Pleasures* had an End,
 For *Fortune*, cruel *Fortune*, was no *Friend*.
 To the new *World* in quest of her I ran,
 80 No nearer there, than when I first began –
France next taught *Manners* and improv'd my *Taste*:¹
Taste taught me *Pleasure* – *Pleasure* taught me *Waste*.
 Now *Genius* long kept in, broke out to View,
 I had some *Critics* and *Admirers* too,²
 But happy still in what my *Patron* gave,
 I just had learnt the useful Art to save,^o *of saving (money)*
 When *Fortune*, jealous of my present State,
 Rais'd up a *S*—*s*³ to plunge me into Fate –
 From me the Man of pow'r the *P*–*t*–*nt* took,
 90 And look'd as all such callous *Statesmen* look.⁴
 But *Fortune* once more, tho' severely kind,
 Threw a dark gleam o'er my benighted Mind,
 And, hard! (yet who can stand^o *Heav'ns* high Decrees?) *resist, oppose*

¹ France ... Taste] The young Popple was resident in Paris from 1723 to 1729.

² Critics ... too] These lines refer to Popple's two plays produced on the London stage in 1734-5.

³ S—s] Unidentified.

⁴ When Fortune ... look] Apparently in reference to a dismissal from the employ of the 'Man of Pow'r' Horace Walpole, but the detail is not known. *P*–*t*–*nt*: 'Patent'?

Kill'd a lov'd *Brother*, to make Room for me;¹
 My gen'rous *Friends* perceiv'd my inward Grief,
 And turn'd the means of Sorrow to Relief;
*Newcastle's*² Breast with sacred pity glow'd,
 And, scarcely ask'd, the vacant Post bestow'd;
 For this, great *Peer*, be known to latest^o Time, *utmost*
 100 If such the Fate that waits the Poets' Rhyme!
 Thus station'd, ev'ry Friend would think me mad
 Still to preserve the *Rhyming Vein* I had;
 Besides, Years foll'wing Years, rob ev'ry Man,
 Still stealing from *Life's* universal Plan:^o *scheme*
 From me, they've stol'n the Joys of Love and Wine –
 Public Diversions are no longer mine –
 E'en Verse, the Poet's last and dearest Joy!
 Age creeping on now hastens to destroy.
 Yet after all, what would you have me do?
 110 Should I the long-neglected Verse pursue?
 All like not all – each for his Vein^o will ask, *particular style*
 To please the World is not an easy Task.
 “Odes from the *Laureat*, some think wond'rous Things,
 And some like *Pope* alone because he *stings*”;³
 As in a Feast, where diff'rent Tastes prevail,
 Some call for *Partridge* – some more nice, for *Quail*;
 These are not pleas'd, unless their *Dish* they find,
 No set of *Guests* were ever of one Mind.

¹ Brother ... me] Alured Popple (1699-1744), William's elder brother, died suddenly in post as Governor of the Bermudas, leading to William's appointment as his successor.

² Newcastle] Thomas Pelham-Holles (1693-1768), first Duke of Newcastle.

³ “Odes ... stings”] Here and in subsequent passages in quotation marks, the poet, or Popple, begins to express his thoughts in the apothegmatic style suitable for poetry.

- What for such various *Tastes* should I prepare?
 120 One likes, and two reject, my Bill of Fare.
 But should I now sit down, and court the *Muse*,
 Grant ev'n her Aid, she should not now refuse;
 "What time can I bestow, what hour command?
 Wit, when disturb'd, is always at a Stand;
Levees are *Duties*, which we all must pay,
 And ev'ry great Man has his public *Day*.
 At Home a Friend breaks in – sometimes a dun,^o *debt collector*
 Something or nothing still one's *Ears* to stun."
 "But these things cannot happen ev'ry Hour;
 130 You must have some spare Moment in your pow'r?
 Rhyme as you walk, your *Morning Thoughts* digest:
 The Mind breathes freer when it is at rest."
 "Abroad, a thousand Objects strike the Sight
 From Morn to Noon, from Noon to dewy Night.¹
 Here Chairmen Porters under Burthens sweat,
 Coach jamm'd with Coach, and Chair by Chair o'erset^o – *knocked over*
 Mad Dogs and Bulls in ev'ry Street are found,
 And Sows, all Mud, dispute each inch of Ground.
 In such a place, dear Friend – at such a Time
 140 A Man must be a *Devil* that can *Rhyme!*"
 Like *Bacchus*'s followers, to *Sloth* inclin'd,
 Poets love Solitude and ease of Mind;
 Hurry distracts them, be it what it may,
 No matter whether Men's or Children's Play –
 'Midst *Noise* and *Tumult* no(t) one Bard can write,
 The same the busy day or sleepless night –
 For ease and quiet *Poets* still will call,

¹ *From ... Night*] 'Milton' (authorial note). *Paradise Lost*, I.742-3: 'From morn | To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve'.

Nor is the only noisy place *Whitehall*;
 Each Street has *Fops* and *Fools* to talk one dead,¹
 150 And drive all ancient^o *Learning* from the head. *long-established*
 With *Brow* severe, and busy'd quite in *Thought*,
 Absorb'd in what each wiser *Grecian* taught,
 Behold the Man of Learning in the Streets,
 A laughing-Stock to ev'ry Fool he meets.
 Dumb as a *Statue* see him stalk along,
 And meditate – intent the tuneful Song!
 How strange his Looks! How stiff his Gait and Air!
 Well may the rude unletter'd *People* stare!
 On me no Mob shall such Advantage take,
 160 Nor at my cost, their brawny Shoulders shake;
 Let hard'ned *H*—² to public scorn inur'd,
 Write till the scribbling Fool is drubb'd or cur'd.
 Once *George's* Coffee house³ with Pride beheld
 Two Brothers, who in diff'rent Parts excell'd.
 Each Night this *Gemini* of *Templars*⁴ came,
 Each Night their *Conversation* was the same:
 “How rich your *Eloquence*! Your Thoughts how clear!
*Murray*⁵ himself would make no Figure here.”
 “Your *Pardon, Brother* – But yet were it so,

¹ *talk one dead*] Perhaps recalling Samuel Johnson's *London*, 1738: 'here a female aetheist talks you dead' (18).

² *H*—] Unidentified.

³ *George's ... house*] *George's* was in the Strand.

⁴ *Templars*] Lawyers or barristers with chambers in the Temple, London.

⁵ *Murray*] William Murray (1705-93), Solicitor General 1742; Attorney General 1754; Lord Chief Justice 1756; referenced by Popple in Epistle 1.19.24 (above) and elsewhere.

170 *Ryder*¹ and you have all the Law you know.”
 ’Tis so with Bards: this just can write an Ode,
 And this to *Pindus*² knows the common Road,
 Yet hear them talk: you’d swear the tuneful Nine,^o *the Muses*
 With nicest Care had polish’d ev’ry Line.
 Go to the Library,³ behold us there:
 What State! What Pride! what haughtiness of Air!
 This in an empty Corner peering looks,
 And to his Friend⁴ laments the want of Books.
 “This Library, Great *Caroline’s* Design,⁵
 180 Without your *Works* will never truly shine;
 How well your labour’d^o *Night Thoughts*⁶ would appear!” *effortful*
 “Not if your Prize Verse,⁷ Brother *Sm—t*, was here.”
 “Ah! Sir – the Verse, indeed, like *Milton’s* tells^o – *impresses*

¹ *Ryder*] Sir Dudley Ryder (1691-1756), Attorney General 1737; knighted 1740; Lord Chief Justice of the King’s Bench 1754.

² *Pindus*] One of the mountains on which the Muses dwelt. Knowledge of the ‘common road’ taken there, or ‘just’ being able to compose an ode, suggest no extraordinary poetic powers.

³ *the Library*] The British Library, of very recent foundation (1753).

⁴ *his Friend*] The figures in the ensuing mini-dialogue take on the characters of two widely-read poets of the 1750s, Edward Young and Christopher Smart.

⁵ *Great Caroline’s Design*] Queen Caroline (1683-1737) was a tireless book collector whose library, at first housed in an elegant building in St James’ Palace, was absorbed into the British Library.

⁶ *Night Thoughts*] Young’s *Night Thoughts* appeared between 1742 and 1745.

⁷ *Prize Verse*] In 1750 Smart received the Seatonian Prize for his *On the Eternity of the Supreme Being*, a ‘poetical essay’ in Miltonic blank verse.

But *Zanga*¹ sure *Othello* far excels.”

Thus gen'rous to each other's Works, we weave
 The *Crown* – which from each other we receive,
 Like *Fencers*, who with *Foils* ascend the *Stage*,
 And, without *Danger*, furiously engage.
 They part at last. Here *Milton* stalks along,
 190 There new-created *Shakespeare* joins the Throng;
 If more they ask, I freely give it all,
 And by what Name he likes, each *Poet* call;
 For he who writes, and yet would live at Ease,
 Must labour much this *chol'ric Race* to please;
 So when I write, whatever *Bard* I meet,
 With some great *Name* the scribbling Fool I greet.
 But when the *Fit* is o'er, and *Sense* returns,
 My honest Breast with *Indignation* burns;
 I shut my ears, which I had stretch'd before,
 200 And plainly tell him I will hear no more,
 Whilst he with endless *Vanity* supplied,
 Gives to himself the *Flatt'ry* I denied.
 Now mark, what pains, what labour he must take,
 Who would a Poem truly Classic make.
 Rough as a *Censor*, he will not afford
 Room for a low, or an improper Word;
 What tho' no other Eye but his should see,
 The Closet must no *Sanctuary* be;
 Unwillingly perhaps they quit their place –
 210 They merit none, and therefore find no *Grace*.
 Strong nervous Words, which ancient Authors us'd,
 And modern Times thro' ignorance refuse,
 Reviv'd again, adorn each glowing line,
 And clear'd from *Rust*, with brighter *Splendour* shine.

¹ Zanga] The Moorish villain in Young's play *The Revenge* (1721).

New Words struck out with *Taste* now rise to sight,
 And charm at first with their own native *Light*;
 By use made known, their *Merit* soon appears,
 And claims the *Sanction* of a length of Years.
 His state enrich'd his ripen'd *Genius* shows,
 220 And, like a Torrent, pure, yet rapid, flows.
 All *Ornaments*, luxuriant, rough or weak,
 Banish'd his *Works*, in others refuge seek;
 No pains he spares, tho' seeming to take none;
 No pains appear, when the great *Work* is done.
 So *Faussan*¹ could inimitably please,
 And tho' in Torture, seem'd to dance with Ease.
 "If such the pains that rack the Poet's brain,
 Such the hard Task each Poet must sustain,
 Better be Fool or mad" – With all my Heart!
 230 Nay, I'll compound^o to Write no worse than *S—t*.² *agree, settle*
 How easy, Sir, to rise like him in vogue,
 'Tis but a *Prologue* or an *Epilogue*,
 An *Attribute* of *God*, to pieces torn,³
 Or *Milton's* noble Thoughts to tatters worn.
Epics and *Satires* may create a Name;
 If I can cheat myself, 'tis just the same.
 If my own *Follies* please, what's that to you?
 Who would be wise, to be unhappy too?
 At *Argos* once, there liv'd a Man of Worth
 240 Not noble, nor yet destitute of *Birth*,
 Just in his Dealings, Civil to his *Wife*

¹ Faussan] The Name of a famous Dancer some years ago in England (ms note). M. and Mme Faussan both danced at Drury Lane.

² S—t] Christopher Smart.

³ An Attribute ... torn] Smart was known for his religious poems.

Proper and right in ev'ry Part of *Life*;
 An honest *Neighbour*, and a cheerful Guest,
 And when he treated, always gave the best.
 He fill'd no Bottles with what Wine was left,
 Nor curst his Servants for each trifling theft;
 He never ran his *Nose* against a Stone,
 And could avoid a *Well* altho' alone;¹
 This *Man*, too fond however of a *Play*,
 250 Would stay behind when all else went away.
 His *Fancy* now supplied the Actor's place,
 His active *Thoughts* each *Sentiment* could trace,
 He clap't, encor'd, and did a thousand Things,
 When Passions play on honest *Nature's* strings.
 His Friends in pity for the *Doctor* send,
 And to his harmless *Madness* put an end.
 His joyful *Neighbours* to his House repair;
 He met them with a discontented Air.
 "Well, Sirs! (cried he), you've cur'd, I own, my Brain,
 260 So kindly take your *Labour* for your pain.
 From *Health* restor'd what pleasure can I find,
 Robb'd of the sweetest *Error* of my *Mind*?"
 Well! after all – Light trifles *Youth* become,
 'Tis Age's Business to call *Wisdom* home!
 'Tis *Hers* to realise *Life's* proper Plan,
 And leave the number'd feet for *Boys* to scan!²
 Struck with this *Truth*, almost a Convert grown,
 I ask myself these *Questions* when alone:
 When *Dropsic*^o *Humours* o'er the Mass^o prevail, *dropsical ... body*
 270 Shall I not tell the *Doctor* what I ail?
 Yet tho' I own the *Reason* is the same,
 The *Dropsy* of my Mind I dare not name.

¹ *He never ... alone*] I.e. he was cautious and prudent.

² *leave ... scan!*] In reference, as in Horace, to checking the scansion of words used in verse.

Pain makes me seek one *Illness* to remove,
 The other *Illness* is a *Thing* I love!
 But if the drug applied fails of its cure,
 Why the same *Remedy* again procure?
Philosophers have said, Heav'n's best Gift, *Wealth*,
 Brings *Wisdom*, *Virtue*, *Courage*, – what not? – *Health*.
 Well! I have tried it, and increas'd my Store,
 280 Am I now wiser than I was before?
 'Tis plain I am not – Why then follow still
 What rather will encrease than cure my Ill?
 Once cheated where he trusts, who trusts again,
 Who pities willing Authors of their pain?
 Indeed, if *Riches* made a man more wise,
 Or open'd on each *Passion*, *Reason's Eyes*,
Av'rice were *Virtue* – I should blush to see
 The World contain a richer Man than me.
 But if whate'er I buy is truly mine
 290 (And *Lawyers* to that *Sentiment* incline),
 The Field that feeds me then is my Estate,
 The *Stock*, the *Crop*, the *Farmers* on me wait;
 Whate'er they plant, for Money they afford,
 'Tis I that am the *universal* Lord.
 Thus step by step, the whole Estate I buy,
 The Man of thousands has no more than I.
 For where's the difference – tell me, Ye who know -
 In *Money* laid out now, or long ago?
 "'Tis now an Age since I possessed this Land,
 300 I now have all things at my own Command."
Fool, you deceive yourself. You buy each thing,
 The daily Food your Slaves before you bring,
 The Fire you burn, tho' from your Woods convey'd,
 Is but the former *Purchase* which you made.
 "But Sir, I have a monstrous Tract of Ground,
 For twice ten Miles, you scarce can see a bound."

What then! nor that, nor aught can stable make
 What ev'ry Hour of fleeting time may take,
Donation, Purchase, Force make *Titles* fall,
 310 Or if these fail, *Death* soon will take it all.
 Since then a Fee for ever is a Joke,
 And *Heirs* oust *Heirs*, as *Waves* by *Waves* are broke,
 Boast your great *Lordships* – boast your Acres too,
 To your immense Possessions add still new,
 Then try, if *Pluto* can be brib'd with Gold,
 If *Death*, which swallows all, is bought or sold!
 There are, who never yet could call their own,
 The sparkling *Diamond*, or embroider'd *Gown*,
 Whose *Roofs* no Marble Pillars yet sustain'd,
 320 Whose *Rooms*, no *Busts* nor *Pictures* yet contain'd;
 There are, whom nobler Things than these adorn,
 There are, my Friend, who hold these things in scorn.

What is this changer^o *Temper* of Mankind? *inconstant*
 Who, ev'n in *Brothers*, ever saw one Mind?
 This scorning *Wealth*, for *Pleasure* has a Taste
 And all his *Substance* will in *Pleasures* waste;
 This, who makes *Riches* his supreme delight,
 Sweats in the Eye of *Day*, nor sleeps at Night.
 Say, *Genius*, for to thee and thee alone,
 330 This wond'rous Secret can be truly known:
 Say thou, who form'st for each his future plan,
 Man's *God!* who liv'st and diest with ev'ry Man!
 Say – but in vain the *Muse* enquires – as well
 Why *human* Faces differ, Man might tell!
 Be this my *Law*: To take just what I may,
 Nor mind, what any greedy *Heir* may say.
 If discontented, he deserves no more;
 If pleas'd, why, he has all my little Store.
 Yet still some diff'rence, I and all should make,
 340 Betwixt Free *Livers* and the wasteful *Rake*;

Between the *Miser*, who would all things spare,
 And him, who manages with prudent care.
 For much they differ - Lavish *Fools* spend all,
 The cheerful *Liver* - as *Occasions* call;
 His *Fortune*, large enough, wants no increase,
 No thought of future *Ills* disturb his Peace;
 Like Boys broke up,^o he sports his Time away,
 But makes not ev'ry Day an Holiday.

in vacation

Let *Poverty*, while Life lasts, from me fly:

350 Contented I can live, contented die;
 In great or small Ships, all to Sea may go.
 Large *Vessels* make indeed the better Show,
 But great or small, 'tis just the same to me,
 'Tis I, and only I, that go to Sea.
 Who can command a favorable *Gale*?
 A prudent Man with any *Wind* may sail,
 In Strength, in Wit, Form, Virtue, Fortune, Cast^o
 Enough, if not the first, nor yet the last.

style

“You are not covetous, you say – agreed.

360 But to this *Vice*, will no one else^o succeed?
Ambition, Anger, Fear – are all these gone?
 Fear you not *Death*, or *Spirits*, when alone?
 To *Fortune*-tellers have you never been,
 Nor trembled at the *visionary Scene*?
Dreams, Portents, Witches, Wizards, Magic, all
 Which wiser Men do Women's *Fables* call –
 Born in the Year – no matter what – yet say,
 Do you still think with Pleasure on that Day?
 Can you forgive a Friend – nay more, a Foe?
 370 And do you ev'ry *Day* still better grow?
 If Thorns, like these, still fester in your *Breast*,
 Why pluck out one, my Friend, and leave the rest?

no other

Quit then *Life's* Scene, unless you truly know,
 What to yourself, and all Mankind you owe;

You've play'd enough, you've eat and drank your fill.
There is a time for all Men to be still!
For if, too gay, we urge the *Frolic* on,
And never know the Season to have done,
The wanton *Race*,¹ who soon will take our Place
380 Will push us off, and laugh, too, in our face.”

¹ *Wanton Race*] I.e. the young.