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Will, E.L. 1982. "Ambiguity in Horace, Odes 1.4." *Classical Philology* 77:3, 240-245.

#### AMBIGUITY IN HORACE *ODES* 1. 4

Lucius Sestius, known as one who revered the memory of Marcus Brutus long after the event, had served under Brutus as proquaestor in Macedonia in 43–42 and had refused to betray him. He was proscribed.<sup>1</sup> But twenty years later Augustus chose him as *consul suffectus* when he himself withdrew from the consulship in the middle of the year 23. Dio cites this as an example of Augustus' broadmindedness. It was probably also in 23 that Horace published the first three books of the *Odes* and wrote, or at least dedicated, to Sestius the fourth ode of Book 1.<sup>2</sup> Close in age and in political convictions, the poet and the new consul had surely, in spite of their different backgrounds, been friends for years, at least since the time of their mutual service under Brutus, certainly since Philippi. With the publication in 23 of Books 1–3 of the *Odes*, Horace would also, like Sestius, have achieved the pinnacle of his career. What was more natural than for him to honor Sestius by placing his poem near the front of the first book, in the company of the poems to Maecenas, Augustus, and Virgil? Now at last it was safe to honor even a friend who kept likenesses of Brutus on display at home.

The fourth ode of Book 1 is explicitly addressed to Sestius, but, superficially, that appears to be that. "The poem is in no way about Sestius," in the words of one commentary.<sup>3</sup> The relevance to the addressee, which Horace is usually careful to articulate in the twenty-odd odes dedicated to specific individuals in the first three books, seems at first glance strangely lacking. The emphatic position given the poem to Sestius in the collection as a whole seems to make the omission the more striking. A closer look, however, particularly in the light of what is known

1. App. *BC* 4. 51, where by an apparent textual error the praenomen is mistakenly given as Publius. Dio 53. 32. 4 gives the name correctly as Lucius Sestius; cf. *MRR*, 2:349, 362–63.

2. For a recent discussion of the date of publication of the *Odes*, see R. G. M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace: "Odes," Book I* (Oxford, 1970), pp. xxxvi–xxxvii.

3. Nisbet-Hubbard, *Commentary*, p. 68.

about Sestius from archaeological sources, reveals a succession of oblique but at the same time pointed references which, taken in concert, seem to make of the poem a very personal dedication.<sup>4</sup>

L. Sestius had a model for loyalty in his father, Publius, staunch friend and supporter of Cicero. It is in the *Pro Sestio* of 56 B.C. that we first meet the young Lucius, who would have been around seventeen years of age at the time. He was born about 73. His alert testimony and careful attention to the demands of his role at his father's trial reflected both filial piety and the acumen which would lead to future achievements in business and in politics.<sup>5</sup> By the age of thirty, he was probably assembling a fleet for Brutus and Cassius (Cic. *Att.* 16, 4, 4 *navigia luculenta . . . Sesti*).<sup>6</sup> The next year he was serving as proquaestor, an office in which he issued coins on Brutus' behalf.<sup>7</sup>

After the amnesty, L. Sestius apparently returned to Italy, and it would probably have been at this point that he began to take an active part in the family's extensive pottery business. Brickstamps bearing his name have been found at widely scattered locations in and near the city of Rome. Since bricks and tiles were in general, for obvious reasons, made close to the area in which they were to be used, we can assume that L. Sestius owned in the neighborhood of Rome a factory for the manufacture of bricks. His factory was probably one of the first to produce fired, rather than sun-dried, bricks. That reason alone could account for the popularity (attested to by the distribution of the finds) of his bricks in Rome, baked bricks being much more fire-resistant than their sun-dried equivalents. His bricks have perhaps also been found in the *Ager Cosanus*, at the villa of Sette Finestre, one of the largest and best preserved of the distinctive, turreted villas built in the neighborhood of Cosa in the Roman period.<sup>8</sup> P. Sestius, Cicero

4. On Horace's efforts to link poems in *Odes* 1-3 to the persons to whom they were dedicated, see the discussion in G. Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 51-86.

5. See Cic. *Sest.* 6, 10, 144, 146; cf. F. Münzer, s.v. "Sestius" (3), *RE* 4 (1923): 1885. That he was born around 73 is suggested by his probably having held the quaestorship in 44. T. R. S. Broughton, my former professor, was kind enough to read this paper in manuscript. He thinks that L. Sestius held the quaestorship, probably in 44, when he was below the minimum age of 31. Such cases were not unknown. He refers to G. V. Sumner, "The Lex Annalis under Caesar," *Phoenix* 25 (1971): 368-69, where two or more cases under Caesar of quaestors below the age of 31 are discussed. Broughton also suggests that Sestius was amnestied at the latest in 39, at the treaty of Misenum.

6. Cf. *MRR*, 2:326. See my discussion of this matter in "The Sestius Amphoras: A Reappraisal," *Journal of Field Archaeology* 6 (1979): 349 and n. 40.

7. See M. H. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage* (London, 1974), pp. 515, 741, and pl. 61.

8. On the bricks of L. Sestius, see *CH*, 15, 1444-45, and Will, "The Sestius Amphoras," pp. 341, 347-49, and nn. 28, 35. The finds in the *Ager Cosanus* were reported by D. Manacorda in a letter to me and in a paper delivered at a symposium, "The Seaborne Trade of Ancient Rome in the Late Republic and Early Empire," sponsored by the American Academy in Rome in late 1978 and early 1979. See now the published form of the paper, "L'ager Cosanus tra tarda Repubblica e Impero: forme di produzione e assetto della proprietà," in *The Seaborne Commerce of Ancient Rome: Studies in Archaeology and History*, ed. J. H. D'Arms and E. C. Kopif (Rome, 1980), pp. 173-84. The same work also includes a discussion of the Sestii in a chapter by J. H. D'Arms, "Republican Senators' Involvement in Commerce in the Late Republic: Some Ciceronian Evidence," pp. 81-84. The same text is reproduced almost verbatim by D'Arms in *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), pp. 55-62. In both discussions, D'Arms summarizes, with less accuracy than I would have wished, the results of my research over the years on the Sestii. On the Sestii at Cosa, see also, among several other recent and useful publications by Manacorda, "Produzione agricola, produzione ceramica e proprietari nell'ager Cosanus nel I a.C.," in *Società romana e produzione schiavistica II: Mercè, mercati e scambi nel Mediterraneo*, ed. A. Giardina and A. Schiavone (Bari, 1981), pp. 3-54, 263-74. In the Late Republic, both bricks and tiles could be described as *tegulae*, the two being almost indistinguishable, especially in fragmentary form. I am grateful for that observation to Prof. F. E. Brown.

tells us (*Att.* 15. 27. 1), owned a villa at or near Cosa, and it may well be that Sette Finestre or some other villa in the vicinity will one day prove to be the estate, or one of the estates, owned by the Sestius family. Unless L. Sestius took the trouble to bring his own bricks from Rome to Cosa, in one of the family's *navigia luculenta*, he perhaps also had a brick factory near Cosa. He was, in any case, engaged in the manufacture of *tegulae*, and either he or his father, or both, had shipping interests, or at any rate the ability to amass the group of ships to which Cicero refers.

L. Sestius also manufactured commercial amphoras of a type used as shipping containers for wine. He is named on several amphora trademarks found at Cosa and not duplicated as yet elsewhere. The assumption seems justified that the same factory near Cosa produced both the bricks and the amphoras bearing his name. The amphoras are jars belonging to a tall, elongated shape popular in Italy from the second quarter to the last quarter of the first century B.C. Stylistically older forms of the same type of amphora had also been produced in large numbers by the Sestius family earlier in the century, and perhaps in the latter part of the second century B.C. as well. These were the famous "Sestius" wine amphoras.<sup>9</sup> They have been found by the hundreds in the Grand Congloué underwater excavation off Marseilles and also at widely scattered coastal and inland sites in France, Spain, Switzerland, Italy, and perhaps elsewhere. Excluding the Grand Congloué, many more of them have, however, been found at Cosa than at any other site (70% of the total), and for that reason it seems logical to assume that production of the amphoras took place on the Sestius property at Cosa. The older jars seem to have been in use until about the middle of the first century B.C. They were thus produced in the time of P. Sestius and probably also of his father Lucius (tr. pl. about 91). The Grand Congloué "wreck," if it was one wreck, apparently consisted of a shipment of filled amphoras from the Cosa area, perhaps transported in one of the Sestius family's *navigia luculenta*, destined to meet disaster off Marseilles. In any case, the size of the shipment and the wide distribution of Sestius amphoras in the western Mediterranean area argue for the existence of a large amphora factory at Cosa, one which may have constituted a kind of monopoly in its time. No Republican amphora stamp is found more often in the

9. For full discussions of the varieties of Sestius amphoras and of the Sestius family's connection with their manufacture, see E. L. Will, "The Sestius Amphoras," and "Les amphores de Sestius," *Revue archéologique de l'Est et du Centre-Est* 7 (1956): 224-44. The huge bibliography that has grown up around the topic since the 1950s is summarized in those two articles and in D. Manacorda, "The Ager Cosanus and the Production of the Amphorae of Sestius: New Evidence and a Reassessment," *JRS* 68 (1978): 122-31. For the most recent general discussion of the site of Cosa, see F. E. Brown, *Cosa: The Making of a Roman Town* (Ann Arbor, 1980). It was at Prof. Brown's invitation that my own study of the Roman amphoras of Cosa was undertaken. The most recent discussion of the Port of Cosa is in A. M. McCann, "The Harbor and Fishery Remains at Cosa, Italy," *Journal of Field Archaeology* 6 (1979): 391-411. On the Ager Cosanus in general, see S. L. Dyson, "Settlement Patterns in the Ager Cosanus: The Wesleyan University Survey, 1974-1976," *Journal of Field Archaeology* 5 (1978): 251-68 and "Survey Archaeology: Reconstructing the Roman Countryside," *Archaeology* 34.3 (1981): 31-37. Preparation of the final publication of the Port of Cosa was completed in early 1982 (see the forthcoming volume by A. M. McCann et al., *The Portus Cosanus: An Early Roman Port and Fishery*). In that book, my chapter on the Roman amphoras contains a full discussion of the Sestius amphoras. Cf. also Will, "Greco-Italic Amphoras," *Hesperia* 51 (1982), forthcoming, an article in which I suggest that, at Cosa, earlier, "Greco-Italic" amphoras were manufactured by the Sestii as early as the early second century B.C., and possibly even in the third century.

West. Given the existence of this important source of income for the family, it would have been natural for the younger L. Sestius to become involved with the family pottery interests after Philippi and eventually to expand production to include *tegulae* as well as shipping jars. He would later have opened a pottery factory near Rome, or perhaps he inherited such a factory from his grandfather, C. Albinus.<sup>10</sup>

Pottery manufacturing was a way to wealth in antiquity. After the Augustan Age, brick making seems to have been particularly lucrative. There is evidence that noble, and even imperial, fortunes were made and sustained by brick factories and that this tendency increased as the Empire developed.<sup>11</sup> Both Cicero and Catullus speak of P. Sestius as a person of wealth.<sup>12</sup> The expansion or diversification of the family pottery business into bricks may have endowed his son Lucius with even greater resources and perhaps made more explicable both the broad-mindedness of an emperor and the unswerving friendship of a poet laureate.

Archaeological and literary sources combine to suggest the broad outlines of the career of L. Sestius. If we go on to examine the fourth ode of Book 1 in the light of what is known about Sestius, both the poem and the ceramic evidence seem to take on new meaning and in the process to elucidate each other.

To one aware of L. Sestius' background, Horace seems to indulge in double entendres which are as pointed as they are ambiguous. Thus, 1. 4. 2: *trahuntque siccas machinae carinas*. The Sestius family's ships would have been in drydock in the winter. With spring, Roman commercial shipping revived. Also, 1. 4. 8: *Vulcanus ardens visit officinas*. *Officina*, which Horace uses on only one other occasion, is the regular designation in Latin for "pottery factory," abbreviated as "OF" on thousands of trademarks on bricks, amphoras, and other ceramic products. Although the word in line 8 applies to the workshop of Vulcan and the Cyclopes, its use in a poem addressed to Sestius, who was probably a pioneer in the production of fired bricks, gives it a double charge of meaning, just as was the case with the use of *carinas* in line 2.<sup>13</sup> Sestius' pottery kilns, as famous as his ships, are reactivated when commerce begins again in the spring. The addressee, and the informed reader, are now alerted to the possibility of further indirections in the remainder of the poem. *Regumque turris* (1. 4. 14) and *regna vini* (1. 4. 18) recall the characteristic, tower-laden Roman villas still visible in the *Ager Cosanus* and the wine "kingdom" which the Sestius family, from the archaeological evidence, had all too clearly constructed. *Rex*, in any case, is used

10. See Will, "The Sestius Amphoras," pp. 348-49. In n. 37 of the article, I suggest the possibility that the Sestius amphora "empire" might also ultimately have included factories for the manufacture of Arretine. I am grateful to Prof. H. Comfort for his kindness in discussing this matter with me by letter. It should be noted that recent research by L. Long at the Grand Congloué site off Marseilles has produced definite evidence of two wrecks, one superimposed on the other. The upper wreck contained the jars with Sestius trademarks.

11. The brickstamps from the city of Rome provide ample documentation of this fact. See *CIL*, 15 *passim*. Such factories were regularly owned and managed by women, as I discuss in "Women in Roman Business and Industry" (in preparation). Cf. E. L. Will, "Women in Pompeii," *Archaeology* 32 (1979): 39.

12. Cic. *Att.* 13. 2. 2, *Fam.* 5. 6. 2, 13. 8. 3; Catull. 44.

13. E. C. W. Stinton, "Horatian Echoes," *Phoenix* 31 (1977): 160, suggests that in line 8 Horace is humorously echoing Ap. Rhod. 3. 41. He is probably right. In a poem as polished as this, Horace would not be incapable of using multiple levels of ambiguity. He would have chosen the line from the *Argonautica* precisely because it was so suited to his topic.

by Horace to refer to persons of wealth. Similarly with *beate* (l. 4. 14). The word's standard implication of wealth almost removes it from a list of ambiguities, although it may well serve the double purpose of praising Sestius' political good fortune on attaining the consulship. *Pallida Mors* (l. 4. 13), if we knew more, might also be relevant to Sestius' life, not the incomprehensible turn of subject decried by W. S. Landor and not entirely T. C. W. Stinton's tongue-in-cheek echo of tradition (perhaps the death of P. Sestius himself had recently occurred?).<sup>14</sup> At l. 4. 19–20 "nec tenerum Lycidan mirabere, quo calet iuventus / nunc omnis et mox virgines tepebunt," still another reference to Sestius may lie in the name Lycidas. Milton's use of the name, and its consequent fame in the western world since the seventeenth century, may lead us to forget just how unusual a name it is. Other than this single occurrence in Horace, the name is given by Virgil in *Eclogues* 9 to one of the speakers, a shepherd-poet, a reminiscence of a similar figure in Bion, and in *Eclogues* 7. 67 Virgil uses it of a beautiful boy. Ovid uses it of a Centaur. The name is clearly uncommon. Why did Horace choose to use it in line 19?<sup>15</sup> Has the reference purely rustic, possibly Virgilian, connotations? The answer to that question may lie in our interpretation of an amphora stamp found in the excavations of "SUNY House," a large residence at Cosa. The stamp reads "LVC.LV.SE." The last four letters of the trademark abbreviate the name of L. Sestius; the first three letters are the start of the name of the person who actually made, or supervised the making of, the amphora in Sestius' factory. He was very likely a Greek slave or freedman. Lycaon? Lycidas? Here the poem and the stamp may conceivably elucidate each other, especially in view of the indications preceding line 19 in the poem. If Lycidas were an actual person, someone who impressed Horace on a visit to Sestius' estate at Cosa, someone he wished to compliment, the relevance of the poem to Sestius would be intensified, as would the force of the final lines.<sup>16</sup> But there may be no connection between the name and the stamp.

On a purely visual level, the poem, particularly the first twelve lines, sketches for us in bold strokes a scene not unlike some miniature landscapes found on the walls of Pompeii and Stabiae: a turreted *villa maritima*, trees in spring foliage, ships near the shore, ready to sail, fields and vineyards, out-buildings, and figures busy with the work of the estate. We may have before us a word-picture of the Tuscan estate of the Sestii.

The fourth ode of Book I, far from being a typical, Hellenized "spring" poem,

14. P. Sestius seems to have been alive as late as 35 B.C., when he would have been about sixty years of age. See Will, "The Sestius Amphoras," p. 348 and n. 30. On Landor's difficulties with Horace's transitions, see S. Commager, *The "Odes" of Horace* (Bloomington, 1962), p. 59, n. 9, and p. 263, where Landor's "angry marginalia" is quoted: "*Pallida Mors* has nothing to do with the above!" For Stinton's discussion of *pallida Mors*, see "Horatian Echoes," pp. 160–62.

15. Virg. *Ecl.* 7. 67, 9 (passim); cf. Bion's epithalamium of Achilles and Deidamia, where a Lycidas is the chief speaker. The reference in Ovid is *Met.* 12. 310. Cf., on Horace's possible reasons for using the name, D. Ho, *L'uso dei nomi propri greci come parametro del progresso artistico di Orazio* (Turin, 1967), p. 46, and Williams, *Tradition and Originality*, p. 302, who makes the fascinating proposal that "the name Lycidas suggests poetry written by Sestius." It is pleasant to imagine that L. Sestius might have wished to surpass the *nefaria scripta* of his father, referred to by Catullus in poem 44.

16. On the "SUNY House" amphora stamp of L. Sestius, cf. Will, "The Sestius Amphoras," p. 348, nn. 29, 39, and fig. 7b (in n. 29, the very tentative proposal is made that "SUNY House" might have been, in the Augustan period, the town house of L. Sestius). On the "SUNY House" excavations, see V. J. Bruno, "A Town House at Cosa," *Archaeology* 23 (1970): 233–41.

Fraenkel's "lovely forerunner" of 4. 7,<sup>17</sup> may be closely connected to the addressee. The emphatic placement of the poem at the beginning of the *Odes*, Horace's long friendship with L. Sestius, and Sestius' sudden political prominence in 23 B.C. make more understandable the likelihood that the poet would have wanted to write a poem that was personal but not offensively so, especially to the ears of Augustus, a poem that by indirection paralleled in words the idealized ambiguity of other forms of Augustan art as well as the political ambivalence of the period. Of this ambivalence both Sestius and Horace himself were very clear examples. The poem thus takes its place, along with the poems to Maecenas, Augustus, and Virgil, as an emphatic part of the introduction to Books 1–3 of the *Odes* and as a sign, however decorously indirect, that Horace's Republican ties were still strong, particularly in the context of the year 23.

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17. *Horace* (Oxford, 1957), p. 419.