

- METER: alcaic (see Horace I.9). The word **antehāc** in line 5 is pronounced and scanned as two syllables, equivalent to **ant(ēh)āc**.
- 1 \***bibō, bibere** (3), **bibī**, to drink. **est bibendum**: an impersonal use of the passive periphrastic; translate: "there must be. . ." The defeat of Antony and Cleopatra at the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. and their subsequent deaths in Alexandria were the occasion for great celebration in Rome.
  - 2 **pulsō** (1), to strike. **pulsanda**: supply **est**. **Saliāris, -is, -e**, Salian (referring to priests known for grand banquets), priestly. Take with **dapibus** in line 4.
  - 3 **örnō** (1), to furnish, provide. **pulvīnar, pulvīnāris** (n), couch. Horace is referring to the **lectisternium**, an ancient ceremony of prayer or thanksgiving during which images of gods were placed on couches and served banquets.
  - 4 **tempus erat**: a shift in tense to express a less urgent demand, "(it) would be the right time" (+ infinitive). **daps, dapis** (f), feast, banquet. **sodālis, sodālis** (m/f), comrade, friend.
  - 5 **antehāc**, previously, before. **nefās**: supply **erat**.  
**Caecubum, -ī** (n), Caecuban wine. This was an expensive wine from Latium.
  - 6 **cella, -ae** (f), cellar, storeroom. **avītus, -a, -um**, ancestral. **Capitōlium, -ī** (n), the Capitol. The two peaks of the Capitoline Hill were the Arx on the northern side, where, according to legend, the sacred geese of Juno warned the Romans of a night raid by the Gauls in 387 B.C., and the Capitol to the south. On the Capitol was Rome's most sacred temple, dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Juno, and Minerva. It was here that consuls took their vows of office and generals concluded their triumphal processions with an offering of thanks. **Capitoliō**: dative of reference ("for . . .") to be translated after **ruīnās**, as **imperīō** is to be translated after **fūnus** in line 8.
  - 7 **rēgīna**: i.e., Cleopatra. **dēmēns, dēmentis**, mad, insane. **dēmentis**: modifying **ruīnās** even though it should logically go with **rēgīna**. What poetic device is this?  
**dēmentis**: = **dēmentēs**.
  - 8 **fūnus, fūneris** (n), funeral, death, destruction. **fūnus et**: = **et fūnus**.  
**imperium, -ī** (n), rule, empire.
  - 9 **contāminātus, -a, -um**, unclean, filthy, tainted. **contāminātō**: with **grege**. \***grex, gregis** (m), flock, herd, gang. **turpis, -is, -e**, filthy, foul. **turpium . . . virōrum**: i.e., the perverted (according to the Romans) men of Cleopatra's court, which would have included eunuchs.
  - 10 **morbus, -ī** (m), disease. **morbō**: ablative with **turpium**. **quidlibet**, anything at all. Object of **spērāre**. **impotēns, impotentis**, unable to stop, mad, crazy. The infinitive **spērāre** depends on this adjective.
  - 12 **ēbrius, -a, -um**, drunk. **minuō, minuire** (3), **minui, minūtum**, to make smaller, lessen, diminish. The subject is **nāvis** (13). **furor, furōris** (m), rage, madness.  
**furōrem**: i.e., of Cleopatra.
  - 13 **vix**: take with **ūna**. **sōspes, sōspitis**, safe, saved.
  - 14 **lymphātus, -a, -um**, maddened, crazed. **mentem . . . lymphātam**: i.e., again, of Cleopatra. **Mareōticum, -ī** (n), Mareotic wine (from the region of Lake Mareotis, near Alexandria in Egypt).
  - 15 **redigō, redigere** (3), **redēgi, redāctum**, to bring back, force.
  - 16 **Caesar**: i.e., Octavian, subject of **redēgit** (15), **adurgēns** (17), and **daret** (20).  
**ab Italiā**: an exaggeration for effect; the battle of Actium was fought off the coast of western Greece. **volantem**: supply **rēginam**.
  - 17 **rēmūs, -ī** (m), oar. **adurgeō, adurgēre** (2), to press toward, closely pursue. **accipiter . . . vēnātor** (19): translate in this order: **velut accipiter (adurget) mollis columbās aut citus vēnātor leporem . . . accipiter, accipitris** (m), hawk. **velut**, just as, as.
  - 18 **mollis, -is, -e**, soft, gentle. **mollis**: what number, gender, and case? **columba, -ae** (f), dove. **lepus, leporis** (m), hare. \***citus, -a, -um**, swift, quick.
  - 19 **vēnātor, vēnātoris** (m), hunter. **nivālis, -is, -e**, snowy.
  - 20 **Haemonia, -ae** (f), an old name for Thessaly in northern Greece. **catēna, -ae** (f), chain. **catēnis dare**, to put in chains.
  - 21 **fātālis, -is, -e**, deadly, destructive. **Quae**: "But she." **generōsus, -a, -um**, noble.  
**generōsius**: what does the ending indicate?
  - 22 **muliebriter**, in a womanly way, like a woman.
  - 23 **expavēscō, expavēscere** (3), **expāvi**, to fear greatly, dread. **ēnsis, ēnsis** (m), sword. **latentis . . . ōrās** (24): "hidden shores," "safe haven."
  - 24 **reparō** (1), to obtain again, seek instead.



**Cleopatra's Triumph in Defeat**

*This is a complex poem on the defeat of Cleopatra at the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. and her subsequent suicide. In a concentrated poetic fashion, Horace looks at the quest for power and its consequence through the figures of Cleopatra and Octavian. What words vividly portray Cleopatra and her lust for power in the first sixteen lines? How does the portrayal of her change in the second half of the poem?*

Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede liberō  
pulsanda tellūs, nunc Saliāribus  
ōrnāre pulvīnar deōrum  
tempus erat dapibus, sodālēs.

5 Antehāc nefās dēprōmere Caecubum  
cellīs avītīs, dum Capitoliō  
rēgīna dēmentīs ruīnās,  
fūnus et imperiō parābat

10 contāminātō cum grege turpium  
morbō virōrum, quidlibet impotēns  
spērāre fortunāque dulcī  
ēbria. Sed minuit furōrem

vix ūna sōspes nāvis ab ignibus,  
mentemque lymphātam Mareōticō  
15 redēgit in vērōs timōrēs  
Caesar, ab Italiā volantem

rēmīs adurgēns, accipiter velut  
mollīs columbās aut leporem citus  
vērator in campīs nivālis  
20 Haemoniae, daret ut catēnīs

fātāle mōnstrum. Quae generōsius  
perīre quaerēns nec muliebriter  
expāvit ēnsem nec latentīs  
classe citā reparāvit ōrās.

(continued)



- 25 **Ausa**: "Having dared to," "Enduring to" (+ infinitive), from the semideponent verb **audēre**. Lines 25–32 present a compressed view of Cleopatra's final moments. There are a variety of ways to construe this passage. For instance, you will notice that there are only participles in this passage; some commentators, therefore, translate **ausa** as **ausa est. et**, even. **iaceō, iacēre** (2), **iacuī**, to lie (here, in ruin). **vīsō, vīsere** (3), **vīsī, vīsum**, to look upon, gaze at. **rēgia, -ae** (f), palace, royal city, capital.
- 26 **vultus, -ūs** (m), face, expression, countenance. **fortis et . . . trāctāre** (27): "and brave (enough) to handle. . . ." **asper, aspera, asperum**, harsh, rough, scaly.
- 27 **\*āter, ātra, ātrum**, black, deadly.
- 28 **combibō, combibere** (3), **combibī**, to drink in deeply. **corpore combiberet**: an unusual choice of words. What is the traditional account of Cleopatra's suicide? Does Horace allude to that here? **venēnum, -ī** (n), poison.
- 29 **dēliberō** (1), to resolve. **dēliberātā morte**: "in her resolution to die," "in having chosen the manner of her death." **ferōx, ferōcis**, fierce, courageous, brave.
- 30 **saevus, -a, -um**, savage, cruel. **Liburna, -ae** (f), Liburnian galley (a small ship that Octavian used to great advantage against Cleopatra at the battle of Actium). **saevīs Liburnīs**: dative with **invidēs**. **\*scilicet**, certainly, clearly. **invidēō, invidēre** (2), **invidī, invīsum** (+ *dat.*), to envy, begrudge, deny.
- 31 **privāta**: "as a private person" (i.e., no longer queen). **dēdūcī**: present passive infinitive depending on **invidēs**, "that she be led away." **\*superbus, -a, -um**, magnificent, proud, haughty.
- 32 **humilis, -is, -e**, humble, submissive. **nōn humilis**: with **mulier**. **triumphus, -ī** (m), triumph, triumphal procession, victory parade. **triumphō**: "in . . ." or "for . . ."



... *fortis et asperās trāctāre serpentēs. . .*



- 25   Ausa et iacentem vīserē rēgiā  
       voltū serēnō, fortis et asperās  
       trāctāre serpentēs, ut ātrum  
       corpore combiberet venēnum,  
       dēliberātā morte ferōcior;  
 30   saevis Liburnis scīlicet invidēns  
       privāta dēdūcī superbō  
       nōn humilis mulier triumphō.

1. Rome is in a festive mood. What rhetorical device and grammatical construction emphasize the need for celebration in the first stanza? What is meant by the phrase *pede liberō*?
2. For a Roman, the word *rēx* recalled the Etruscan kings and foreign domination. What particular response would the carefully juxtaposed words *Capitōliō rēgina* (6–7) have evoked?
3. The turning point of the poem is in the simile in lines 17–19. What transformation takes place? Who is now the intended victim? Who is the aggressor? What uncertainty do we now feel about the Roman celebration?
4. In the remainder of the poem Cleopatra grows in dignity and strength; she, in fact, becomes more Roman and even stoic. Where is this evident? Cite Latin words to support your answer.
5. One important theme of the poem is drinking, drunkenness, and sobriety. Find examples of Cleopatra's drunkenness. When does she sober up to reality? What is the irony of her final drink?
6. There are many poetic devices in this poem. Find examples of *anaphora* (see question 3 on Catullus 5), interlocked word order, *simile* and *metaphor* (see question 6 on Catullus 76), *alliteration* and *assonance* (see question 3 on Catullus 5), *synecdoche*, and *litotes*. It has been said that the art of poetry depends partly on the correct use of the letter *s*. Where does Horace succeed at that in this poem?
7. Consult a good history of Rome for an account of the battle of Actium and Cleopatra's suicide. Where has Horace taken considerable license in his presentation of the events? Also, compare Horace's account of the battle of Actium to the pictorial description of it on the divinely made shield of Aeneas in the following translation of lines 675–713 of Vergil's *Aeneid*, Book VIII. What are the major differences between each poet's approach to this historical event?

The queen in the center called up her columns by sounding the tambourine of her land; she had as yet no thought of the pair of asps which fate held in store for her. Her gods, monstrous shapes of every species, even to the barking Anubis, leveled weapons against Neptune, Venus, and Minerva herself. In the battle's midst raged Mars, moulded in iron, and from the sky scowling Furies let loose their savagery; Strife with her robe rent strode in joy, and Bellona followed with her blood-stained scourge. But Apollo of Actium saw; and high on his vantage-point he already bent his bow. In dread of it, every Egyptian, the Indians, every Arab, and all the host of Sheba were on point of turning in flight. The queen herself could be seen calling on the winds and setting sail, pictured at the very moment when she shook the sail-sheets loose. The God whose Might is Fire [Vulcan] had portrayed her amid the massacre, pale with the pallor of impending death, as she sped over the waves before a north-west gale. Before her the River Nile, with sorrow expressed throughout his great length, opened his full robe, and with all his raiment invited the vanquished to the bosom of his blue waters and the refuge of his streams.

(translated by W. F. Jackson Knight)