

Mausoleum of Empire: Futurity and Futility of Imperialism in Horace's *Odes*

I. Horace. *Ode.2.9.17-24*¹

Desine mollium
tandem querellarum et potius nova
cantemus Augusti tropaea
Caesaris et rigidum Niphaten
Medumque flumen gentibus additum
victis minores volvere vertices
intraque praescriptum Gelonos
exiguus equitare campis.

At last stop from soft lamentations and let us rather sing the new trophies of Caesar Augustus, and the rigid Niphates, and that the Euphrates River added to the conquered peoples is rolling smaller whirlpools, and that the Geloni, within limitation, are riding in narrow plains.

II. Horace. *Ode.1.37.12-17*

sed minuit furorem
vix una sospes navis ab ignibus,
mentemque lymphatam Mareotico
redegit in veros timores
Caesar, ab Italia volantem
remis adurgens.

but a ship, barely safe from the fires, reduced her madness, and Caesar led her mind watered by Mareotis wine back into true fears when he, with oars, purses her flying from Italy.

III. Horace. *Ode.1.37.30-32*

scilicet invidens
privata deduci superbo,
non humilis mulier, triumpho.

a private woman, a woman not humble, evidently refusing to be transported for the grand triumph.

IV. Horace. *Ode.1.12.53-57*

ille seu Parthos Latio imminentis
egerit iusto domitos triumpho
sive subiectos Orientis orae
Seras et Indos,
te minor laetum **reget** aequus orbem.

whether he (i.e. Augustus) will have led the Parthians, bordering on Latium, dominated by the just triumph, or he will have led the Chinese of the eastern shore, and the Indians subjugated, he, less than you (i.e. Jupiter), will reign the joyful world fairly.

¹ Translations are my own.

V. Horace. Ode. 3.29.25-28

Tu civitatem quis deceat status
curas et urbi sollicitus times
quid Seres et regnata Cyro
Bactra parent Tanaisque discors.

You care about what manner fits the citizens and,
you, anxious for the city, fear what the Chinese,
the Bactrians ruled by Cyrus, and the
inharmonious Tanais contrive.

VI. Horace. Ode. 4.15

Phoebus volentem proelia me loqui
victas et urbes increpuit lyra,
ne parva Tyrrenum per aequor
vela darem. Tua, Caesar, aetas

Phoebus chided me with a lyre when I was
wishing to speak about wars and conquered
cities, lest I would set a small sail through the
Tyrrenum sea.

fruges et agris **rettulit** uberes 5
et signa nostro **restituit** Iovi
derepta Parthorum superbis
postibus et vacuum duellis

Augustus, your age carried plentiful fruits back to
fields, restored the standards stripped from
Parthians' haughty doors to our Jove,

Ianum Quirini **clausit** et ordinem
rectum evaganti frena licentiae 10
iniecit emovitque culpas
et veteres **revocavit** artes

closed the temple of Janus that was empty of
wars, threw correct order and bridles onto the
roaming lawlessness, removed crimes, and
recalled old arts.

per quas Latinum nomen et Italiae
crevere vires, fama que et imperi
porrecta maiestas ad ortus 15
solis ab Hesperio cubili.

Through which the Latin name and Italian powers
grew, and the fame and majesty of imperium was
stretched from the Western resting-place of the
sun to its rising-place.

Custode rerum Caesare non furor
civilis aut vis exiget otium,
non ira, quae procudit enses
et miseris inimicat urbes. 20

With Augustus being the guardian of affairs, no
civil fury or violence will drive out leisure. Not
anger, which forges swords and makes wretched
cities enemies.

Non qui profundum Danuvium **bibunt**
edicta **rumpent** Iulia, non Getae,
non Seres infidique Persae,
non Tanain prope flumen orti.

Those who are drinking the deep Danube will not
break the Julian laws, nor the Getae, nor the
Chinese and the treacherous Persians, nor those
who have descended from close to the Tanais
River.

Nosque et profestis lucibus et sacris 25
inter iocosi munera Liberi
cum prole matronisque nostris
rite deos prius adprecati,

And both on working days and during festivals,
after duly praying to the gods first with our
children and wives among the gifts of playful
Liber,

virtute functos more patrum duces
Lydis remixto carmine tibiis 30
Troiamque et Anchisen et almae
progeniem Veneris canemus.

in a song mixed with Lydian flutes, we will sing
the leaders who engaged in the ancestral virtue
and custom, we will sing Troy, Anchises, and the

VII. Vergil.*Aeneid*.6.792-795

Augustus Caesar, divi genus, aurea condet
saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva
Saturno quondam, **super** et Garamantas et Indos
proferet imperium

Caesar Augustus, the offspring of god, will build
a golden age, who will bring imperium back to
Latium through the fields once ruled by Saturn,
and he will extend the imperium over both the
Garamantes and the Indians.

VIII. Horace.*Ode*.1.28.1-6

Te **maris et terrae** numeroque carentis harenae
mensorem cohibent, Archyta,
pulveris exigui prope latum **parva** Matinum
munera nec quicquam tibi prodest
aeris temptasse domos animoque
rotundum
percurrisse polum morituro.

Small tributes of scanty soil near the Matinian sea
confine you, Archytas, measurer of sea and land
and sand that lacks number, nor is it anyway
beneficial for you to have attempted the heavenly
houses and to have run along the rolling pole with
a soul that will die.

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