

Horace the Warhawk?: Military Ambition and Echoes of the Civil Wars in *Odes* 1

Throughout *Odes* 1, Horace presents a broad and hostile world of Roman interaction, which does not always express the stability and security of Roman *imperium* positively. Yet the presentation and manipulation of boundaries and geography in Horace's *Odes* remains largely untouched. Myers (2008) and Nisbet and Hubbard (1980) provide a framework for geography in the *Odes*, including elements of foreignness. They have not, however, considered the relevant comparisons to the civil wars. Contrarily, Santirocco (1986) has discussed echoes of the civil wars throughout the *Odes*, but has not identified them with foreign geography. Finally, no present scholarship establishes hostile geography and foreign warfare as thematic threads throughout *Odes* 1.

My paper argues that this geography simultaneously celebrates Roman *imperium* and advocates external military ventures as a necessity to avoid domestic war. I begin this project with a close reading of the relevant sections of *Odes* 1.2, 1.3, 1.12, 1.21, 1.29, 1.35 and 1.37. In this reading, I am focused on the notable presentations of geography and ethnography. In particular, I identify threats of foreign invasion (both from east and west), exhortations for preemptive strikes, and comparisons between internal safety and external risk. I also provide attention to Horace's discussion of the civil wars, most notably in his comparisons between domestic and foreign conflict. Through this comparison, not only does Horace depict foreign war as preferable, but as the method by which further civil strife can be averted.

This analysis is not merely thematic, but also engages with metrical positioning, specifically internal and external line placement as indications of threat and security. Likewise, although intertextuality is not a focus of this project, I consider, briefly, the Greek lyric poets as relevant sources of influence. I also consider comparisons with Vergil and Ovid, with which I can establish a baseline for imperial geography – the *imperium sine fine* – to highlight the unique and threatening geography of *Odes* 1.

Unlike the Vergilian ideology, Horace's world abroad is full of dangers waiting on the frontiers.

These enemies are also metrically placed on frontiers, placed at the beginnings and ends of lines, *serves itirum Caesarem in ultimos | orbis Britannos* (*Odes* 1.35.29-30). Similarly, the references to the failed Arabian expedition of 26-25BCE in 1.29 do not fit a purely panegyric framework of geography. Horace's boundaries are thus both open and closed, permeable yet dangerous, anticipating the geographical model of Strabo, as Nicolet argues (1991, 8). It should be clear that Horace's geography is not just another *imperium sine fine*.

Foreign enemies are not the only sources of danger which Horace discusses. Alongside these *Britanni*, there are the *cicatrucum et sceleris...fratrum* (*Odes* 1.35.32-33). These images of civil strife do not merely rest in the background of Horace's history and geography, but instead are explicitly discussed as the alternative to foreign conquests, notably in *Odes* 1.12, as well as elsewhere in 1.35. Likewise, the “ship of state” of 1.3 is threatened by *iracunda...fulmina*, a phrase which anticipates the depiction of Actium in *Odes* 3.4, as well as other Augustan motifs of the civil wars (West 2007, 18).

The models of the *Odes*, as established by Barchiesi (2007), are dialogs and appeals, bound to particular addressees, whether divine or human. Horace's violent foreign geography, thus, is not an explicit representation of reality, but instead should be read as a persuasive appeal for foreign expansion as the countermeasure against domestic war. Even the frequent discussion of past achievements, and the pitfalls of the civil wars, are not solely reflective, but also, ultimately, forward-looking, implying the domestic alternatives to this expansionist policy. The message is clear for Horace: foreign war is the alternative by which the Romans can avoid domestic strife.

Bibliography

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