

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

Horace's lyric poetry sweeps through the *orbis terrarum* and encompasses the majesty and grandeur of an expansive geographical space. He predicts that Augustus will subjugate the Chinese and the Indians (C.1.12.55-56). He envisions the fame of Rome's empire stretching from where the sun sets to where it rises (C.4.15.15-16). Scholars tend to dismiss Horace's imperial messages as adulatory and hyperbolic. For example Mayer (2012: 128) thinks that the conquest of China and India in C.1.12 "is an encomiastic fantasy." However, I think under the glorious surface of Horace's verses lie his doubts and critiques. My paper will explore these sentiments within the historical context of his poems, particularly within the transformation of Rome through Augustus' building program.

Among all the new monuments and architecture under construction during Horace's lifetime, the poet was able to see the completion and opening of Augustus' mausoleum in the Campus Martius in 23 BCE. In this paper I shall consider the interaction between the *orbis terrarum* in Horace's *Odes* and the *orbis* of Augustus' circular mausoleum. Previous scholars (Reeder 1992; Davies 2000) have noted the Egyptian influences on the Mausoleum of Augustus. Moreover, Davies (2010) sees the mausoleum as a trophy for Augustus to show his military power and success in Egypt. Building on these interpretations of the monument, I will focus on the blending of present and future on the mausoleum from the perspective of Horace and his contemporaries as well as the blurring of lyric and historical time in his *Odes*. I shall argue that while some earlier *Odes* participate in the propaganda of Augustus' mausoleum to celebrate foreign conquests and to prescribe the future empire, C.4.15, the last poem in Horace's lyric collection, recalls the mausoleum's funerary function and questions the reality and practicality of

Rome's *imperium sine fine*.

Bibliography

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