

## Political Dissent in *Nemoraque Specus et Antriis*

Given that Horace invokes Bacchus for divine inspiration in Ode 3.25 while he is composing a poem that will honor the living deification of Augustus, this poem is typically viewed as pro-Augustan propaganda. However, contextualization of Horace's *Odes* often reveals small rebellions against Augustus. Thus, the goal of this project is to demonstrate the subversive nature of Ode 3.25 by examining Antony's link to Bacchus, the invocation of Bacchus, and contemporary perceptions of deification.

Antony identified himself with Bacchus so thoroughly that in his *Philippics*, Cicero acrimoniously decries Antony's proclivity for finery and wine (Leigh 1996). Meanwhile, Augustus sought Apollo as his patron god (Freyburger-Galland 2009). Consequently, Horace's invocation of Bacchus to inspire him to sing the praises of Augustus recalls the tension between Antony and Augustus. Essentially, "Bacchus ... [encroaches] on Apollo's domain" in Ode 3.25 (Batinski 1991). Given Bacchus is often linked with hedonism and inversion of social mores, his invocation represents a subtle act of defiance against Augustus and his attempts to improve religiosity in Rome. Moreover, Antony's grandiose behavior and his 'deification' as ruler of Egypt was a point of contention between Antony, Augustus, and the Roman people. By invoking a god so tightly linked with Antony in the discussion of Augustus's living deification, Horace emphasizes the hypocrisy of the public for shaming Antony for deifying himself while praising Augustus for doing the same. This evidence provides a strong basis for the interpretation of Ode 3.25 as anti-Augustan propaganda.

## Bibliography

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