

## Wine, *Numen*, and Sacrifice: Public Deeds and Private Sacrifices

### in Horace's *Carmen* 4.5 and *Epistulae* 2.1

I argue in this paper that Horace's libations and prayers in his *Carmen* 4.5 and *Epistulae* 2.1 (henceforth *C.* 4.5 and *Ep.* 2.1, respectively) reveal complex negotiations between private sacrifice and public deeds in the cult of Augustus. I use these scenes to demonstrate the ways in which Horace (i.e., his persona) utilizes private settings in poetry to interpret and negotiate Augustus' public deeds, as well as the traditions of men becoming gods and divine rulers. The poetic scenes interpret the public libations and prayers recorded in the *Res Gestae* (9.1-2), adding Ciceronian exempla and Hellenistic reception to present private scenes in which the *numen* of Augustus is honored as equal to the gods. These negotiations should not be limited to binary interpretations of pro-/anti-Augustan, or questions about the religion of Horace; such interpretations oversimplify the relationship between Horace's scenes and Augustus' presence (cf., Marks 2008; Falcão 2021).

In *C.* 4.5, Horace celebrates Augustus' return from Gaul and a rustic *quisque* welcomes Augustus to the table as a god (line 32: *te mensis adhibet deum*). The poem concludes with the *quisque* adding Augustus' *numen* to that of the Lares *uti Graecia Castoris et magni memor Herculis* (lines 35-6), and prayers to Augustus repeated in the morning and evening (lines 37-40). Prayers to the emperor and his *numen* are echoed in *Ep.* 2.1.16, in which his *numen* receives altars and oaths (*iurandasque tuum per numen ponimus aras*). In *Ep.* 2.1, there is no libation, but the setting of *aras* links the action to the domestic setting of *C.* 4.5, and the assumed *ara* to the Lares (and now Augustus' *numen*). I disagree with the argument that *numen* implies *genius* (*C.* 4.5, Fishwick 1969; *Ep.* 2.1, Rudd 1989), since this assumption is neither supported elsewhere in Horace, nor in contemporary practice (Flower 2017; Scheid 2009).

Horace in these scenes links status of the emperor's *numen* to that of other gods: *C.* 4.5.35-6, Hercules, Castor; *Ep.* 2.1.5, Romulus, Liber, Castor, and Pollux). These divine exempla derive from Cicero's *Natura Deorum* 2.62, in which Hercules, Castor, Pollux, Aesculapius, Liber, and Romulus represent men who achieved divinity through their deeds in life. Horace's repetition of these exempla, with the exclusion of Aesculapius (not named in extant works), makes no outright promise of divinity, but rather these exempla, I argue, demonstrate ongoing negotiations between public and private practice. The public deeds of Augustus pervade the private practices of these sacrifices and prayers, but they do not in and of themselves make him a god in Horace's scenes.

Horace additionally employs and invokes Hellenistic encomia, specifically Theocritus' *Idyll* 17, in order to further complicate the negotiations between public and private. Just as Cicero's exempla achieved divinity through their deeds, *Idyll* 17 honors the *καλὰ ἔργα* of the deified Ptolemy Philadelphus (Hunter 2003). Similar to both Roman Republican and Hellenistic practices, Horace presents Augustus as a good ruler in *C.* 4.5, and *Ep.* 2.1, who, on account of his great deeds, possesses a divine *numen*. Horace's scenes differ in that Augustus is honored in a private setting rather than with public cult and encomia, and that it is his *numen*, not the man himself, which is honored.

The negotiations of *C.* 4.5 and *Ep.* 2.1 bring the public deeds of Augustus into private and domestic settings, where the emperor's *numen* is honored on par with the gods. Horace alters the expectations of Cicero's divine exempla and Theocritus' encomium to demonstrate how Augustus' *numen* receives sacrifices and prayers in private spaces. Horace does not explicitly address the expectation of divinity, but he acknowledges the precedents while subverting them with the private setting and emperor's *numen*.

## Bibliography

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