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**Heroes Today: Creating a Champion with Horace (*Odes* 4.4)**

In 15 BC Drusus and Tiberius Nero waged war in the Alps. Did Augustus ask for poetic celebration of his stepsons' victories? Horace's *Odes* 4.4 begins with an evocation of the awed reaction of the Alpine tribes they defeated. Is *Odes* 4.4 Horace's response to such a request? And, if so, what kind of attitude towards conquest and empire does the poem betray? This paper proposes that *Odes* 4.4 is not straightforwardly propagandist. Rather than offering eulogy (or veiled criticism) of Drusus and Tiberius and their recent successes in the Alps, Horace uses this occasion to explore the making of Roman heroes. *Odes* 4.4, I argue, is a poem about the education and development of Roman champions: it reflects on the creation of a heroic image, instead of simply delivering one on demand.

Questions about the propagandist nature of *Odes* 4.4 have shaped debate about Horace's lyric at least since Suetonius claimed that the whole fourth book of Horatian *Odes* was produced under imperial compulsion. My paper revises previous studies of the implications of writing in response to imperial command, revealing how Horace's poem helps us to think about the image-making of Augustan Rome. Modern readings of *Odes* 4.4 have stressed the poem's Virgilian tension, arguing that Horace's celebratory account of imperial victory is complicated by awareness of the suffering required to make such success possible. I contend that this tension creates a space for the audience to examine the foundations and formation of Roman heroism. And I suggest further that this poem about modern Roman heroism, about education and innate virtue, is equally interested in the way in which heroes are viewed as it is in the way in which they are created.

The multiple points of view that Horace offers us on the Roman heroes whose successes are reflected upon in *Odes* 4.4 provides strong encouragement to readers to consider how their own view of Drusus and his brother has been shaped. Evocations of the historical past and echoes of epic ñ the twin foundations of much Augustan myth-making ñ combine in this poem to build a picture of a modern hero. So when Horace teaches us in *Odes* 4.4 how to make an Augustan hero, and shows us these heroes from more than one perspective, he offers us lyric as a tool to think with about the propaganda of his time. *Odes* 4.4 is not a propagandist exercise, as some have argued, but a reasoned deconstruction of the complex image-making of Augustan Rome.