



# The Odes of Horace

*Horace*

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## **The Odes of Horace** Horace

Along with Virgil, Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus) was the greatest poet produced by Rome, and in many ways his work has had arguably an even greater impact. He and Virgil were both discovered and brought to the court of Augustus by that remarkable aristocrat and patron of letters, Maecenas. But there the similarities end. Virgil was an epic and didactic poet; Horace was a lyric poet who adapted the complex meters of Greek poetry to the needs of Latin.

His brilliant expression and astonishing acumen continue to amaze readers today, either in their original Latin or in innumerable worldwide translations. Shakespeare's debt to Horace is incalculable, and it is difficult to read his Sonnets today without immediately being reminded of the famous Odes.

Horace, born in 65 B.C. in the southeastern region of Hellenized Italy, was the son of a freedman of modest means. In the civil war between Antony and Octavian, he threw in his lot with Antony and fled along with the rest upon their defeat at Phillipi in 42 B.C. His subsequent discovery by Maecenas and eventual rehabilitation with the Augustan regime was one of history's most fortunate reconciliations.

The works of Horace include the *Odes*, *Epodes*, *Satires*, *Epistles*, and various other fragments and hymns. His gentle nature and free-flowing mind produced some of the world's supremely great poetry, and his legacy to Latin letters is assured for as long as civilization itself remains. Horace died in 8 B.C., just a few short weeks after his beloved patron, Maecenas.

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