

BOOK REVIEW

A Companion to Persius and Juvenal. Edited by SUSANNA BRAUND and JOSIAH OS-GOOD. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, Pp. xiv. + 612. \$200.95 ISBN 978-1-4051-9965-0.

To open their discussion of Dryden's *Discourse of Satire* at the beginning of chapter eighteen Osgood and Braund succinctly reiterate the claim Osgood makes in the introduction: "it is the central premise of this volume that viewing Persius and Juvenal as self-consciously the successors to the Republican satirists Lucilius and Horace sheds important new light on their poetry, written in such a different political climate. (409)" That a companion should have such a strong direction can be seen as either refreshing or obfuscating depending on one's opinion concerning the general point of handbooks. Regardless, Osgood and Braund have edited a volume that seeks to be both expansive in coverage and specific in perspective, and for the most part they succeed.

The volume is divided into three sections that reflect this central argument and seem to me to correspond primarily to distinct audiences. The first, Texts and Contexts (chapters 1–7), considers Persius and Juvenal as writers of satire as a genre and within the socio-political context of the first two centuries CE. These chapters flesh out a basic introduction to Roman Satire and provide insightful overviews of the satirists, their work, and the textual tradition.

The second part, Retrospectives (chapters 8–14), examines the ways in which Persius and Juvenal viewed themselves, and can be seen as inheritors of earlier literature both within the narrower confines of satiric genres and through the more expansive scaffolding of rhetorical, philosophical, and political performance.

In the final section, Prospectives (chapters 15–22), the nearly two thousand year reception of Persius and Juvenal is traced in a variety of contexts, but attention is primarily on the Anglo-American reception. With its emphasis on satiric legacies and focalization through Persius and Juvenal this volume moves deftly from the Roman Republic to the present. Nevertheless, given, for example, that Rosen begins the first chapter on "Satire in the Republic" with a quotation from Jonathan Stewart and Winkler closes with a discussion of "Persius and Juvenal in the Media

Age,” there emerges an acknowledgement that a cyclical nature of the satiric impulse and its reception lies beneath this focus on the sliver that the editors define as “imperial satire.”

Despite the emphasis on succession and tradition, some of the essays, and especially those in the first section, trod over necessary ground for a companion. The focus is clearly on establishing the cultural circumstances of Persius and Juvenal writing as imperial authors and the implications for the construction of a book of satire under those circumstances. That approach entails the reader to bring to bear a considerable amount of knowledge about the tradition of Roman Satire and the conditions of imperial Rome. Such expectations are heightened in the second section as the contributors turn to how Persius and Juvenal absorbed and explored previous and contemporary genres, authors, and approaches. In many ways this volume is as much about Lucilius and Horace (and Callimachus, Seneca, Cicero, etc.) as it is about Persius and Juvenal. This makes for some thought provoking essays that move beyond what one might expect from a companion, but requires either considerable ancillary knowledge or additional reading depending on the audience. Some essays, on the other hand, bring together disparate collections of details into a coherent narrative. The discussion of Holt N. Parker (chapter 7) and subsequently Parker and Braund (chapter 19) of the textual and commentary tradition, for example, is extremely lucid.

This important focus on satirical succession, however, lends itself to a disproportionate emphasis on the programmatic satires. A quick glance at the index allows the reader to see the dominance of Persius’ prologue and first satire as well as Juvenal’s first satire. To some extent the gravitational pull of these programmatic passages is unavoidable, and since the miscellany of Roman satire involves an inevitable overlapping of themes, the impression left is on occasion either oversaturation or an opportunity missed. Furthermore, while in many ways Juvenal and Persius should be considered together, sometimes this unification seems unnecessarily forced. For example, Shadi Bartsch’s penetrating discussion of Persius’ stoicism and its intersections with Horace and Seneca might stand better on its own without a desultory three page coda on “Juvenal and Philosophy.” Difficult as well is tracing the reception of these satirists together while still accounting for the presence of Horace and others, a recurring issue in the third section. While the editors rightly see the need for viewing Persius and Juvenal as the successors to Horace and Lucilius, this is in competition with other trajectories and orientations that emerge over the course of their reception.

Ultimately there are times the combination of Persius and Juvenal seems strained, times that the presence of Lucilius and Horace dominates the discussion, and times that the narrative of reception eclipses that of the satirists and their satires. Nevertheless this is an extremely learned volume and one with greater coherence and sense of purpose than one might expect from a companion. With an abundance of perspectives and resources for classicists, graduate students, and the zealous undergraduate, the breadth of this volume should make it appealing not only to those interested in Roman Satire but numerous other fields as well.

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