

BOOK REVIEW

Horace's Epodes: Context, Intertexts, & Reception. Edited by PHILIPPA BATHER and CLAIRE STOCKS. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2016. Pp. xiv + 279. Hardcover, \$110.00. ISBN 978-0-19-874605-8.

This volume, with origins in a conference held at the University of Manchester in 2012, adds much to the scholarship on Horace's *Epodes*. Its goal is to tackle major questions anew, aiming "to challenge what we think we know" (23). The nine papers reconsider the place of the *Epodes* in the broad tradition of Greek iambic poetry, question longstanding readings of the work, reevaluate its relationship with ancient intertexts, and reassess its influence in antiquity and beyond.

Andrew Morrison considers the relationship of the *Epodes* to Greek iambic, a generic tradition that encompasses much more than the invective attack often viewed as its chief mode. Tracing the influences of Archilochus, Hipponax, and Callimachus on Horatian iambic, he argues that Horace's mollified vituperation and reorientation of *iambos* toward friendship and morality are indebted especially to Callimachus's *Iambi*.

Ian Goh finds traces of Lucilian satire in the *Epodes*, especially 1–10, which adopt the aggressive invective mode to a higher degree than the concurrent *Satires* 2. Focusing on a range of repeated motifs in the two authors, from sickness and wolf-similes to (un)girt belts and laxative sorrel, he examines how Horace erases Lucilius from the *Epodes* even as he inherits his satiric mantle. The argument is fast and dense and could benefit from periodic recapitulation.

Michael Sullivan persuasively examines how Horace's famous bird simile in *Epodes* 1.19–22 draws on a long line of avian imagery and fables found in Homer, Hesiod, Archilochus, Callimachus, and Demetrius of Phalerum. These intertexts illuminate Horace's concerns with power, poetic authority, justice, and aesthetics in the collection.

Emily Gowers investigates gender. Horatian iambic confuses gender categories, as reflected in the motif of males impersonating females. Horace is a laboring mother, Maecenas a midwife, each struggling to bring the *Epodes* to a successful parturition. Rome's male elite, moreover, is shriveled and unmanned. Although

not all will be convinced that the old hags of *Epodes* 8 and 12 are really eunuchs or *cinaedi*, Gowers nicely illustrates the literary and political anxiety permeating the poems.

Elena Giusti further exposes blurred categories, now in the Dionysiac *Epodes* 9, which together with *Epodes* 1 and *Odes* 1.37 forms an “Actium trilogy.” The poem depicts a topsy-turvy world in which a hazy line separates friend from enemy, Roman from barbarian, truth from falsehood. The poem’s double vision is produced by the dual nature of Bacchus himself. Each element of the poem contains a mirror image of its opposite, and celebratory praise exposes rather than hides the internal nature of Rome’s wars.

Claire Stocks examines the appearance of Hannibal in *Epodes* 16 and *Odes* 4.4. The *abominatus* Hannibal of *Epodes* 16 is linked with ill omens, magic, expiation, and the owl. He fits well in the world of *iambos*, where the impotent have recourse to magical curses, and his presence is a bad omen for Rome’s future. In *Odes* 4.4 Hannibal reappears, now as a panegyrist of Rome. Here it is Rome, an unconquerable Hydra, that has monstrous associations, and it is left ambiguous whether Hannibal’s praises—or curses—expose the strengths or “latent monstrosity” of Augustus’s Rome.

Tom Hawkins traces how Ovid in his elegiac *Ibis* resumes and reformulates Horatian invective. Focusing on the word *ibis*, the legacy of the warrior-poet of Archilochus (fr. 1 W.), and nautical imagery, Hawkins proposes Ovid’s *Ibis* as the “antipode” of Horace’s *Epodes*. Ovid’s heightened aggression counters the toned-down invective of Horatian *iambos*, but his refusal to name Ibis actually exposes the limits placed on free speech during Augustus’s reign. Ovid’s intense vituperation, however, threatens to rerelease on Rome its pre-Actian chaos.

Philippa Bather uncovers Horatian influence on Petronius *Satyricon* 130, focusing on the theme of impotence. Both the epodic Horace and the satiric Encolpius suffer enervation in the face of grotesque, monstrous women. In both works impotence is exposed to be a “crisis of excess” (217), and the solution Petronius puts forth is Horatian moderation as found in the *Satires* and *Epistles*. Petronius thereby exposes a “Horatian corpus at odds with itself.” Bather’s piece nicely reminds us that literary allusion is simultaneously an act of interpretation.

Ellen Oliensis concludes the volume with a meticulously researched and informative look into the “afterlife” of Horace’s *Epodes*. Focusing roughly on the years 1600–1900, she shows that the *Epodes* were not the forgotten text we think of them as being. They were translated, alluded to, read in schools, and excerpted throughout this period, and this is true not just of the well-known *Epodes* 2 but

even of the “obscene” *Epodes* 8 and 12. Canidia in particular formed part of the elite imagination during these years, becoming a byword for ugliness, witchery, and rabid criticism.

This volume provides much food for thought to Horatian scholars as well as to those interested in iambic poetry and its legacy more generally. It is not without errors, however, which range from minor proofreading mistakes (e.g. “purports to addresses,” 48) to one factual error on page 2 (Virgil died in 19, not 17 BCE). There is some unnecessarily verbose and hedging language throughout the contributions. On page 79, e.g., one reads, “I am prepared to entertain in this context the possibility that,” and on page 210, “It is not, I think, unreasonable to suggest.” Such language obscures arguments and blunts their force, but that is an issue with style rather than substance. Overall, I learned a great deal from the book and will consult it again and again in years ahead.

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