

## BOOK REVIEW

*Horace: Satires Book I*. Edited by EMILY GOWERS. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xi + 370. Hardcover, £60.00/\$99.00. ISBN 978-0-521-45220-5. Paper, £23.99/\$40.00. ISBN 978-0-521-45851-1.

**R**ichly abundant as the *lanx satura*, Gowers' long-awaited commentary serves up Horace's first book of *Satires*, bursting with two decades' thought. Gowers began publishing on Horace in 1993, the year in which she brought out *The Loaded Table*, and that long span of work informs this current product.<sup>1</sup> Hallelujah, for the cryptic *Satires* I needed a good commentary to make some sense of it all.

Making sense of the book as a whole is just what Gowers sets out to do; in a neat ring-composition, she explains on page 1 that "the full reinstatement of *Satires* I is in progress [as] a ten-poem pre-Augustan poetry book," and concludes the notes to 1.10 on p. 338 with, "H.'s loose *chartae* ... have finally been pulled together into a self-respecting poetry book." In making her case, Gowers treats the state of the question as a team effort, the combined thoughts of many scholars. Unusually for a commentator, she presents a complete reading of her text across the notes and separate introductions: the poems are autobiographical but deliberately un-pin-down-able; in 1.9, for example, "he takes the part of a satirist to suit the times, inoffensive, reticent and passive-aggressive," teasing his reader (281). At the same time, Gowers presents all sides of disputed points and a generous helping of others' ideas, with a superb bibliography. Her main interlocutors here are Kirk Freudenburg and John Henderson, but no dogma dominates.

The most loving attention is devoted to detail, including meter. Likewise excellent are the notes on Roman culture (for example, on barbershops *ad* 1.7.3) and the *dramatis personae* (for example, on Hermogenes Tigellius *ad* 1.2.3, or the literary cliques in 1.10). Yet Gowers wears her learning lightly, with never an unkind word. Her particular strengths in the Bakhtinian side of satire show well

<sup>1</sup> Emily Gowers, *The Loaded Table: Representations of Food in Roman Literature* (Oxford, 1993). Articles appeared on S. 1.5 (1993), 1.7 (2002), 1.4 (2009), and 1.6 (2009), along with several general articles.

in her treatment of 1.2, 1.5, 1.7, and 1.8, several of which have suffered from scholarly neglect due to their subject matter; here they are treated as respectable parts of that self-respecting poetry book. Her own style is entirely suited to the *Sermones*—chatty, witty: so on Forum Appi, “a well-known dump of a town” (*ad* 1.5.3); on one leg of the trip to Brundisium, “a rare line of latitude in a longitudinal poem” (*ad* 1.5.26); on “the chutzpah of [Horace’s] freedman father” (214—a rare sighting of Yiddish in a Cambridge green-and-yellow); the battle between Persius and Rex, “a seedy courtroom *aristeia*” (*ad* 1.7.1-4).

The book is hugely welcome to the teacher of satire, previously dependent on P. Michael Brown’s necessarily much more concise version in the Aris & Phillips series (1993), Kiessling–Heinze (7th ed., 1957), and the shelves of old school texts whose *communis opinio* goes back at least to the seventeenth century, some of it still quietly persisting here (though Gowers is very good about divulging the lineage of ideas with long ones).<sup>2</sup> The book is still not without issues. As commonly in the green-and-yellows, there is no apparatus criticus, although the notes do discuss points Gowers considers crucial. The general index is sketchy, and a book this dense needs an index locorum; buried within lies a parallel between the text of Horace and that of ps.-Sulpicia (imitator of the satirist), and without me you would not know to look for it *ad* 5.53–4.<sup>3</sup> I would have liked a list of the places where Gowers draws connections between *Satires* I and the *Epodes*, and especially all the ties to Persius and Juvenal, of whom I would have liked to see more; so also Ennius is well represented in the notes, Plautus hardly at all, although Lucilius receives full and first-rate attention. As does Bion, who plays a large part in Gowers’ reading of the philosophical aspects of the sermonizing satires, helping the reader to stay awake through *Satires* 1.1 and 1.3. I would have liked to see more on the reception of a book that served as a school text, with Persius and Juvenal, almost continuously from antiquity to the 1800s. Greedy to ask for more when so much is given; indeed, the book has the faults of its virtues (*est brevitatem opus*, 1.10.9), often repetitive, sometimes too generous in the atten-

<sup>2</sup> P. Michael Brown, ed., *Horace Satires I* (Warminster, 1993, 1995): with a short bibliography and introduction, facing translation in English, and brief notes, useful but keyed to the translation. Brown’s observation on S. 1.7, “perhaps included as a make-weight,” marks his distance from Gowers’ approach.

<sup>3</sup> Density: Compare Elaine Fantham’s exemplary *Lucan De Bello Civili Book II*, also in the green-and-yellow series (1992): 23 pages of text, 147 pages of commentary; Gowers has 26 pages of text, 281 pages of commentary. The pages in Fantham’s *Lucan* are also much smaller, the paper much better, and the ink, for reasons best known to the press, much blacker.

tion given to far-fetched observations, usually others'—sort-of palindromes, quasi-rhymes, “unspoken puns” that “float in the air” (251). In stretches, there is too much glossing for ideal classroom use, especially *ad* 1.6, 1.9.52–78, and 1.10.2–35. This is not immediately noticeable since the glosses are separated by vast stretches of commentary; those students who most need help will be the least inclined to dig through the lemmata in search of help on vocabulary and grammar, which, however, is handsomely provided. Almost never did I think a reading was just wrong (but see *ad* 1.8.39, 47). The book well serves the advanced students and their instructors who constitute this series' readership.

As for today's usual problem, I read every word and found a total of five typographical errors in the commentary, all in punctuation but one (318, line 4, for “H.'s” read “His”—Cicero's, not Horace's). There is, oddly, a typo in the Latin text at 5.31 (*optimus* has slipped in before *atque*, echoing line 27), and *assisto* at 6.114 is mysteriously italicized. In short, a miracle of accuracy in the current deplorable state of book production.

Morris Zapp's monumental work on Jane Austen, he hoped, would put an end to all further writing on the subject.<sup>4</sup> After reading this commentary, it is hard to think what could be left to say about Horace *Satires* I; whatever it is will certainly be much better-informed than before Gowers.

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<sup>4</sup> David Lodge, *Changing Places* (London, 1975) 35.