

BOOK REVIEW

Horace: Odes Book I. Edited by ROLAND MAYER. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. x + 246. Hardcover, £50.00/\$80.00. ISBN 978-0-521-85473-3. Paper, £18.99/\$32.99. ISBN 978-0-521-67101-9.

This latest addition to the fifty-eight titles (forty Greek and eighteen Latin) comprising the Cambridge Greek and Latin Series far exceeds its peers on both sides of the pond. Mayer's extensive teaching experience and familiarity with Horace inform his sage and comprehensive comments throughout the volume.

Relevant philological, topographical, historical, and prosopographical details are skillfully fused. The bibliography is very full and encompasses almost every standard and current work of Horatian scholarship which a Horatiophile would want to see included. The text is very well organized. The absence of any form of running or general vocabulary signals the book's greater suitability for college and very advanced secondary school programs.

Mayer's introduction has seven sections. The first of these, "Lyric Impulse and Lyric Challenge," synthesizes the primary and secondary evidence upon Horace's view of lyric as well as the problems faced by a Latin poet working with Greek meters. The second section, "Technical Challenges of Lyric," treats linguistic register and style as well as word order and placement. Section 3, "The Architecture of the Ode," mines the contributions of decades of Horatian scholarship on this topic, covering in its scope linear progression, situation and response, and the parts of the ode (middles and endings). In similar style, section 4 focuses upon "The Arrangement of the Book." A brisk section 5 deals with "Dates of Composition and Publication"; section 6 handles "Transmission of the Text" and "Tradition of Comment." Mayer's summative "Interpretation and Note" constitutes a concluding section 7.

In the long established traditional approach taken by the commentaries of Anton, Wickham, Keissling, Page, Quinn, and Nisbet and Hubbard, Mayer places the full Latin text of the *Odes* Book 1 (that of the Oxford Classical text) ahead of his full commentary. For each ode the meter is identified and its schema designated by a page reference. There are no head notes. The subsequent commen-

tary features a facile summary of what may be called a cognitive unit. The line numbers (in bold print) indicate the scope of each unit, making it easy for the reader to follow thematic development. Specific clarification of meaning, background, geography, translation, and grammar then follows.

At the close of his commentary on each poem, Mayer offers an interpretation. Each is uniformly masterful for its breadth, depth, comprehension of themes, and command of scholarship. The range of notes encompasses all that any teacher or professor would want in a textbook of this type. As rewarding and enriching as Mayer can be, the extent of his comments, however, assumes, in my opinion, a Latin and Greek language capability well beyond that of advanced high school Latin students. The multiplicity of sources cited so frequently in both Latin and Greek is instructive, unavoidably derivative, but problematic for the early secondary school student. The text's prolific inclusion of Greek originals, reminiscent of the Nisbet and Hubbard (duly noted and praised by the author) will be lost on the non-Greek reader. An extensive bibliography follows the body of the commentary as well as a useful general index.

The symptomatic beginnings of this text, humorously alluded to by Mayer in the Preface (vii), may reflect the same jovial underpinning that seems to accompany Horace when he is cautionary. That tone of Mayer's work is engaging and lively. This may be attributable to the fact that the book, like his commentary on Tacitus, is the product of a long life of teaching and mulling over the many conundrums that the poet has formulated for all of us to ponder age after age. The author's ability to synthesize many sources with as many personal insights sets this commentary apart and is exemplified by his eloquent citation of a small passage from Hawthorne's *Marble Fawn* reflecting his comprehension of *Odes* 1.9, the famed Soracte Ode.

HENRY V. BENDER

St. Joseph's University, hbender@sju.edu