BOOK REVIEW

Selections from Horace Odes III: *An Edition for Intermediate Students:* Odes III.2, III.3, III.4, III.6, with introduction, commentary notes and vocabulary. By JOHN GOD-WIN. New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2019. Pp. viii + 104. Paperback, $12.95. ISBN: 978-1-5013-5018-4.

John Godwin has added another reader to Bloomsbury Press' growing series of Editions for Intermediate Students. Much in the same format as his two editions of *Ovid* and *Horace* (*Satires*),[1] Godwin's *Horace* (*Odes*) offers text, commentary and vocabulary on four of Horace's Roman Odes (3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6). The commentary is intended to assist students who have mastered the basics and are ready to start reading some Latin verse and developing their skills and understanding (preface). Since the linear commentary does not focus on Latin mechanics and grammatical constructions, instructors need to assess where in their curriculum this edition best fits. My experience leads me to use this edition after students have had some experience with Latin poetry. The commentary seeks to elucidate the background and the literary features of this highly artistic text, while also helping the reader to understand how the Latin words fit together into their sentences (preface). Godwin succeeds in his stated goals.

The core of *Selections from Horace Odes III* is divided into Introduction (1-18), Latin Text (19-27), Commentary (29-78) and Vocabulary (79-104). The Introduction includes the expected scope, from biography, relationship between Horace and Augustus, background to Greek lyric and philosophy, metrics, to a short anglophone bibliography. Only sporadically does Godwin place Horace into the context of Roman Literature and, specifically, his place among Augustan authors. Godwin's thrust in his Introduction lies in the very complex poetry of a very complex author whose poems betray an easy one-dimensional interpretation. The explanation of metrics is kept to a rudimentary level. The vocabulary contains all Latin words found in these four odes, but definitions are limited to their use within

[1] *Ovid Metamorphoses III: An Extract 511-733* (Bloomsbury 2013); *Selections from Ovid Heroides: An Edition for Intermediate Students* (Bloomsbury 2019); *Horace Satires: A Selection of Poems An Edition for Intermediate Students* (Bloomsbury 2019).

the selected passages. Macrons are mostly absent in the vocabulary, which may present a hindrance to American users. Greek genitives in -ēs and 4th declension nouns are regularly noted with macrons. The perfect of *devoveo* is given a macron, but the nearby *delevi* remains unadorned. Some prepositions are listed with their required cases (*ab* + abl.), while others (*de*) stand alone. The introductory student should find consistency or an explanation for the editor's decision.

The commentary is the part most useful to the introductory student. Each ode is prefaced with a 1-2 page overview which sheds light on the historical, mythical, philosophical, literary, societal setting and the thematic relationship within the Roman Odes. Herein lies a drawback to this edition. Why have only four of the six odes been included? Godwin acknowledges in his Introduction that the Roman Odes are unique as there is no particular addressee (except *Romane* at 3.6.2), only the Alcaic meter is used, the poems have an internal relationship with one another and these six can be read as one continuous poem unified by societal values and contemporary politics. Godwin frequently refers to *Odes* 3.1, but neither the Latin nor even a translation is included. This is a slender volume. The inclusion of two additional Latin texts or translations does not seem unreasonable. Furthermore, Bloomsbury Press includes on-line resources for this series. A look there finds scant resources.

Godwin offers nothing earth-shattering nor anything unimaginable that supersedes the text. The commentary is well-grounded in scholarly sobriety. Ode 3.2 recounts the values inherent in a good Roman, which lead to quasi-immortality, and the behaviors to avoid, which is a sentiment prepared for the reader in Ode 3.1. Ode 3.3 continues the theme of immortality through mythic examples and concludes with a long speech of Juno who affirms the deification of Romulus and warns against the restoration of Troy based on the immoral qualities of the Trojans. Godwin rightly reminds the reader of the ties between her speech here and her speech at *Aeneid* 12.808ff.[2] Yet, surprisingly Godwin in his linear commentary never cites nor compares anything here to the Vergilian parallel. The epic vision of 3.3 sets the stage for Horace's most epic-like ode, 3.4. Godwin calls attention to Pindar's 1st *Pythian* as a model. But as 3.4 rotates between Horace's near-death experiences and praise to Jupiter who survives the attacks of his amoral rivals, Hesiod's *Theogony* is likewise an important literary precedent. Ode 3.6 paints a picture of contemporary Rome as a city replete with amoral citizens. Like Livy or Sallust,

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[2] Godwin cites lines 818-828. I am not certain whether he purposefully cites the speech at midpoint or whether this reference is an accidental typo.

Horace laments how Rome has fallen from its austere days. Godwin rightly discusses the relationship between 3.6 and Augustus' future moral legislation of 18 BC. Herein the Roman Odes conclude on a very pessimistic note: Horace asks whether anything has not devolved over time. This pessimism may well be connected to the pessimistic ending of the *Aeneid*.

Additionally, Godwin supports his commentary with metrical anomalies, textual variants, figures of speech, word choice, word patterns, semantic connections within an ode and between odes and geographical explanations. Any commentator must make decisions. No two commentaries are ever identical. As stated above, Godwin has not written a dogmatic commentary. The introductory student will find numerous avenues by which to interpret this complex poetry and will be well guided by the author's sound commentary. The on-line resources include Ideas for Further Study. I prefer that a set of discussion questions be appended to each poem. Godwin achieves his goals for his intended audience. Instructors must determine when their students have mastered the basics and what additional directions to take with the complete Roman Odes.[3]

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[3] There is one type-setting error between the 6th and 7th stanzas of 3.2.