

Review

KIRK FREUDENBURG (ED.), *HORACE SATIRES BOOK II*. (Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. 364. ISBN 9780521444941 (hbk); 9780521449472 (pbk). £82.00/£25.99.

In Horace's hands, 'satire is a genre where silences must be maintained, and when silences speak loudly. One must listen for them', writes Kirk Freudenburg (3) in the introduction to his commentary on *Satires II*, which complements Emily Gowers' commentary on *Satires I* in the 'Green and Yellow' series (2012). One might well wonder how to communicate these significant silences while also providing, as F. goes on to do, a generous and well-curated commentary for students and scholars alike. F. does so by offering an abundance of syntactical support as well as a sensitive array of interpretive possibilities, without letting his readers rest comfortably in any single explanation. The Introduction charts personal and political differences between the 'self-assured' Horace of *Satires I* and *this* Horace, a satirist under siege, even as his stature has risen. The construction of speakers in this book is different, too: F. presents us with *Satires II* as overheard conversations that often leave both Horace and his audience on the margins. While providing a strong sense of where the book is positioned in the arc of the poet's output, F. counterbalances that framework with anti-teleological accounts of his life and work, thwarting easy appeals to biography or facile gestures to historical context throughout.

Frances Muecke's Aris & Phillips commentary on *Satires II* (1993), which had previously served as the standard English teaching text, was published early on in the major flourishing of scholarship on Roman satire, thus predating many advances that would be made in subsequent decades, not to mention Paolo Fedeli's commentary, published in the following year in Italian. F. is liberal in his inclusion of both Muecke and Fedeli (and many others). But along with this intellectual generosity, F. positions this volume as a reflection of nearly three decades of deep thought about the problems of narration and authority that these poems pose for their audience. Throughout, F. offers a condensed, accessible version of his critical approach familiar from his scholarship on the Roman satirists, from Lucilius to Juvenal. Several salient references to Persius light the way forward for readers who want to pursue the trail. This commentary signals the maturity of the field, providing both a durable resource for new readers and a firm basis for new inquiries.

Like Gowers, F. has substantially adhered to the text of Klingner's Teubner (1959), but F. has also made use of the paragraphing in Shackleton-Bailey's later Teubner (1991), presenting a collection of *sermones* that is more obviously dialogic through format. F. sensibly rejects the vast majority of Shackleton-Bailey's conjectures, but the conjecture for the vexed II, 6.29 has nudged F. towards his own emendation: F.'s *quare me improbus urges* resolves difficulties of both speaker and metre. That his explanation addresses an unusually 'harsh elision' found in the MSS reflects a preoccupation with sound — and F. is particularly attuned to the sound of satire. Readers are encouraged to listen, as it were, to the satires throughout, by paying attention to metrical features, aurally significant poetic figures, as well as puns and *double entendre* — as is often the case in F.'s scholarship, which is characterised by a fine sense for the absurd. In II, 4, for example, F. suggests we read the onomastic puzzle *Catius* playfully as 'Mr. Clever Sauce' and the figure as a stand-in for both Cato and Maecenas (174–6). But F. also asks us to attend to sound at the level of structure — the 'new narratological reality' (49) — by tracking the voices and hearsay of others, such as Ofellus (II, 2), Damasippus (II, 3) and Tiresias (II, 5).

Especially outstanding is F.'s commentary on II, 8, that discomfiting ending to Horace's satirical project which Daniel Hooley has called its 'darker edge'. F. toggles deftly among references to symposia, comedy, epic, witchcraft and politics, allowing the reader to sense the diversity of allusion: Moments of interpretive tension are discussed so that the poem's jagged edges are illuminated, but not explained away. In the prefatory essay, a sharp summary of the 'overheard conversation' is followed by several pages of interpretive approaches (with a sprinkling of Persius). The political decoding of the poem as reflective of some specific entanglement with Octavian (a product of sixteenth-century philology) is given its historical due, but sensibly rejected. A full set of expectations around Maecenas built up through references from the larger Horatian corpus draws attention to his conspicuous near-omission; this oblique view of the man is thus rendered significant rather than disappointing. In Maecenas' place, the 'shadow' character Balatro emerges

as a touchstone — even if a flawed one — for navigating the mock symposium’s relentlessly ironising humour. The feast’s too-many courses of fish, wine and eel are given structural, intertextual and aural significance. Finally, F. treats readers to a diagram of Nasidienus’ dining-room that provides students of Horace with a tool long deemed necessary to students of Plato. At the end, F. uses Horace’s parting reference to Canidia to remind us that Nasidienus’ hospitality is unsettlingly close to witchcraft, gesturing to the larger Horatian corpus via the *Epodes*. The final note on the aural and orthographical resonance between Canidia, the witch who would shortly reappear in the *Epodes*, and Cleopatra (via Oliensis and Sharland) gives a sense of just how much is at stake, just as the book ends. While the reader has been given a supportive guide, the result is that she is left to struggle, appropriately, with an unsatisfying ending in a classically overstuffed genre.

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