Vergils und den Sinn für Binnenbeziehungen und für Zusammenhänge im Epos schärfen wird, aber für «novice readers» aufgrund der in ihm enthaltenen problematischen Interpretationen nur mit Einschränkungen zu empfehlen ist.

München

Werner Suerbaum


In this volume Nadeau (N.) has now added this substantial book to his 2004 ‘Safe and subsidised. Vergil and Horace sing Augustus’ (reviewed by Sophia Papaioannou in CR 57 (2007) 394–6). ‘Erotica for Caesar’ Augustus similarly pursues personal close readings of central Roman poetic texts: N. looks (in their Horatian running order) at thirty-seven of the odes in Books 1–3 which can classed as erotic, but his interests are not just in matters of love. As his title suggests, the figure of Augustus and his political concerns are presented as playing a central role in the erotic odes: this concern to integrate a reading of Horace’s ‘lighter’ lyrics with the ‘heavier’ political material treated in his previous book is laudable, and runs counter to some modern criticism which seeks to compartmentalise the two, though not all may agree with the means N. deploys to bring them together.

What N. gives us is a series of highly personal analyses which are effectively constructed in isolation from the mainstream of Horatian scholarship. Though N.’s bibliography contains some 500 titles and is impressively up to date for his sign-off point of November 2006, his readings are direct running commentaries on the poems which rarely engage explicitly with current or established scholarly issues and positions (occasionally cited in footnotes). As we shall see, this independence can introduce refreshing new insights, but it can also lead to views which might have gained more perspective and balance from more consideration of existing work.

N. usefully distinguishes between ‘Horatius’, the historical character Horace, ‘Quintus’, the persona of the poet as presented as a character in the poems, and ‘Flaccus’, the poet as literary manipulator of the presentation of ‘Quintus’. This could also be expressed in narratological terms: Quintus is Horace-actor or the intradiegetic narrator and character, Flaccus is Horace-auctor or the extradiegetic narrator. This means that we need not read the poems as literal autobiography, and that irony and tension is possible in the poet’s self-characterisation, both elements which have been traditionally recognised in Horatian criticism. The Quintus of N.’s reading of the erotic odes is a more predatory character than many have supposed: where Quintus questions or ridicules a love-affair, N. argues, it is usually because he himself has a vested interest in pursuing one of the parties. This is a salutary counter to the almost non-participatory observer status which moderns often assign him, and there are a number of odes in which this adds a new interest (for example 1.8, where Quintus is seen as himself in pursuit of Lydia). But there are also cases where this seems misplaced: in 1.5, Quintus is seen as still interested erotically in Pyrrha, an interpretation which surely neglects the poem’s final relieved dedication, while in 1.33 we are asked to believe
that Quintus is himself aroused by the Pyrrha-like Glycera despite his professed devotion to Myrtale.

In his analysis of the erotic odes, N. is commendably concerned to show up sexually explicit elements, too often decorously ignored in Horatian criticism, especially sexual violence and bisexuality. Rape and domestic beatings have a higher profile here than in most analyses: Cyrus' putative revenge on Tyndaris in 1.17 may well have a sexual element as N. suggests, but the idea that the love-bites of 1.13 are the result of an assault at a party seems improbable, as does the idea that Pyrrha's gracilis puer may resort to violence against her when disillusioned (based on a questionable rendering of insolens at 1.5.8 as 'insolent' or 'hybristic'). The crudity and sexual predation of 2.5 is well stressed (though I would not agree that anal penetration is at issue), and Chloris in 3.15 is plausibly read as selling herself for sex (though I would not go as far as N. in holding that she is also prepared to pimp her own daughter to the poet); the idea that the olive oil of 1.8 alludes to its use as a sexual lubricant is intriguing along with Sybaris' Freudian javelin. Quintus' admiration for beautiful boys is rightly spotted throughout (e.g. the puer of 1.38 or the athletes Enipeus in 3.7 and Hebrus in 3.12), though not all will agree in including the Thaliarchus of 1.9 in the list of Horatian love objects (not enough evidence?) or in seeing homosexual elements in Horace's account of Virgil's love for Quintilius (1.24).

As already noted, N. sees Augustan values and culture as central to the erotic odes, both in traditional ideas such as the promotion of athletics amongst the young men addressed or mentioned (almost all of whom are seen by N. as actually or potential Augustan soldiers) and in other less obvious contexts. When Jupiter appears, he is usually symbolically equated by N. with Augustus (examples are listed 453–4). Not all will think that this is an interpretative strategy which works consistently; it is hard to see how Augustus can underlie the climatic Jupiter of 3.10 or the adulterous Jupiter of 3.27. But this analogy can offer benefits outside the obvious context of the Roman Odes, e.g. in 3.32 where the lyre's pleasing of Jupiter might indeed suggest the lyric poet's pleasing of Augustus. N. is keen to stress that one of Quintus' assets in the sexual game is his proximity to the imperial court, but it is not easy to find firm evidence of this: the gods who protect Quintus in 1.17 and are supposed to add to his allure for Tyndaris are surely the tutelary deities of poetry (cf. Odes 3.4) rather than Augustus and Maecenas, and the persuasive erotic rhetoric of 3.9 (assuming it is Quintus that speaks) makes no mention of the poet's political connections as an attraction. N. is good at spotting links between Augustus and Alexander (on 1.22, 2.9), though not all will agree that the allusion to Persicos ... apparatus in 1.38.1 looks to the new Alexander's prospective conquest of the new Persia (Parthia) or that 1.27's allusion to Medes suggests a collection of soldiers of the new Alexander drinking together.

In his Afterword N. mentions the issue of poetic references to Augustan monuments in Horace's Odes, and this is surely an excellent line of enquiry as it is for Vergil's Aeneid. The mention of pumice in 1.11 is interestingly connected with the contemporary use of pozzolana in the Portus Iulius (though this was surely not the only location for this common building technology); 3.11 is rightly linked with the use of the Danaids in the portico of Palatine Apollo, and 3.28

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is coupled with the Temple of Neptune in circo Flaminio (though it is hard to trace any reference to a building in the poem, in contrast with e.g. the open mention of Palatine Apollo in 1.31).

N. also sees the erotic odes as historically grounded in another way: most of the Greek-named characters of the Odes are taken to allude to typical members of the Roman elite classes. This is surely persuasive for characters with Greek speaking names whose behaviour fits that social level (e.g. the sybaritic resting athlete Sybaris of 1.8 or the starily beautiful trader’s wife Asterie of 3.7). However, N. extends such elite identities to most of the named characters and some of the unnamed ones, not always plausibly. Pyrrha in 1.5 and the paidika Mystes of 2.9 are seen as belonging to a high social level (the latter at least is surely a slave?), as are Thaliarchus in 1.9 and the puer of 1.38, whose ministering activities at the symposium suggest servile status in both cases. In seeing the female characters as upper-class Romans N. is plainly reacting to the view of Nisbet and Hubbard that the love-interest in Horace is largely Hellenistic and referring to hetaerae (see p. 153), and perhaps to Sharon James’ more recent arguments on the elegiac puella as hetaera, but arguably goes too far the other way. Here it would have been good to see some discussion of Jasper Griffin’s important demonstration (in ‘Latin Poets and Roman Life’) that the female names in the Odes match Greek names from contemporary inscriptions in Rome.

N. also assumes that repeated names such as ‘Lydia’ refer to the same specific individual each time; it is at least as plausible that these names suggest generic figures, especially when (as in the case of ‘Lydia’) they involve characterising etymological play. ‘Lydia’ (with long first vowel) clearly recalls ludere and suggests an erotic ‘playgirl’, just as ‘Lalage’ (1.22 and 2.5) means ‘chatterer’ (Greek lalein). Etymological play might also suggest an answer to N.’s question as to why wine from 59 BC is called for in 3.28; the oenophile name of that year’s consul Bibulus is surely the reason. N. is not much interested in significant names in general, which is an important strand in these poems, e.g. the fiery flame-haired Pyrrha (Greek pyrrhos) or the consistent use of river-names for youths interesting in swimming such as the Enipeus of 3.7 and Hebrus of 3.12; nor is he interested in names’ potential literary resonances, e.g. the love-obsessed Neobule of 3.12, recalling the supposedly sex-mad girl of Archilochus’ Cologne epode, or the Aristophanic slave-name Xanthias for the slave-loving addressee of 2.4.

N’s well-known interest in the structural analysis of Horace’s odes and its contribution to sense (shown in his series of articles on eloquentes structurae (Latomus 42 (1983) 323–331; LCM 8.10 (Dec. 1983) 153–157; Latomus 45 (1986) 522–540. QUCC 60 (1989) 85–104) comes out in his architectural schemes for each of the odes, which are always worth consideration and often add to interpretation; there are many useful remarks on symmetry and on the significant interaction of balanced sections of the poems (e.g. on the key function of the fourth stanza of 2.9). N. often identifies the central section of an ode as pivotal, and here engagement with research on middle positioning in Horace might have added to his arguments (see the chapter on the Odes in S.Kyriakidis and F.De Martino (eds.), Middles in Latin Poetry, Bari 2004, with bibliography). He is not so interested in thematic links between juxtaposed erotic odes, natural enough given his running commentary format, but (e.g.) Achillean material clearly links
2.4 and 2.5, while the comparison of young humans as calves similarly sets 2.5 and 2.8 together.

N. plausibly regards the first three books of the Odes as having pre-publication access to the Aeneid, and makes a number of intertextual connections (summarised 462–3). These are often fairly loose and general (the two Lalages of 1.22 and 2.5 look to Lavinia as a virginal figure, the catalogue of conquered places in 2.9 looks to Aeneid 6, and the Punic foes of 2.12 look to Dido) and not all will believe the link made through the picture of Ganymede at the end of 3.20 to the Aeneid and Actium. Other intertextual possibilities are less stressed: though N. rightly lays considerable emphasis on interaction with elegy in general in the erotic odes, there is no suggestion that the elegist Albius of 1.33 is Tibullus, and not much is made of the potential (lost) elegiac output of the poet Valgius in 2.9, while the aktinakes or Persian dagger of 1.27 is not linked with its occurrence in Anacreon (PMG 455) and no allusion is made to the evident Sapphic origin of the jealousy-symptoms of 1.13 (fr. 31 L/P).

In sum, this is a refreshingly independent-minded set of close readings of Horace’s erotic odes. Not all of these are convincing, and the book would gain considerably from more interaction with the scholarly environment created by the work of others and from a tighter and less associative mode of argumentation; but its analyses are often stimulating in their questioning of received interpretations and sometimes offer persuasive new insights. Few readers of the Odes will fail to learn from it.

Oxford

S. J. Harrison

Tacitus, Histories. Book II. Edited by Rhiannon Ash. Cambridge: Cambridge UP 2007. XIV, 415 S. 2 Ktn. (Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics). £55 (Pbk. 22, 99). Four years after the publication of Cynthia Damon’s commentary on the Histories 1 (see this journal 77, 2005, 418–421) Cambridge University Press has produced another volume, giving detailed discussion of the next book of this work. Of the four Tacitean volumes which have appeared so far in the ‘green and yellow’ series (the other two are R.H. Martin and A.J. Woodman on Ann. 4 and R. Mayer on Dial.) the present one gives the most extensive commentary, with a Latin text to notes ratio of approx. 1:8.5 as compared to 1:5 in Damon, 1:4.7 in Martin and Woodman and 1:3.8 in Mayer. Its author, Rhiannon Ash [= A.] (currently Fellow and Tutor in Classics at Merton College, Oxford), has been dealing with Tacitus [= T.] for several years, having published, among others, an important book on the Histories (Ordering Anarchy: Armies and Leaders in Tacitus’ Histories, London 1999).

Prefacing the present volume, A. expresses her hope that the commentary «manages to steer a safe path between the Scylla (lack of relevance) and Charybdis (lack of clarity) faced by all commentators» (VII). This mythological (and nautical) image has been used by her before, in the title of her paper Between Scylla and Charybdis? Historiographical Commentaries on Latin Historians (in: The Classical Commentary. Histories, Practices, Theory, ed. by R.K. Gibson and C. Shuttelworth, Leiden 2002, 269–294). She makes there an important distinc-