

EMILY GOWERS, *Horace. Satires Book I*, Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 379, ISBN 9780521458511.

Gowers (G.) states in her Preface (vii) that ‘the aim of this book is to encourage appreciation of the *Satires* as literature and collect in pocket form the most penetrating Horatian criticism of the last two decades’. She succeeds magnificently in her first aim. Any sentence chosen at random would illustrate her critical perceptiveness and penetration, and the deftness, liveliness and sheer interest to be found in the way she writes. As by her author, much is vividly expressed in a small compass. Often telegraphically allusive, her dense comments allow themselves to echo Horace’s metaphors and word play. There is a danger, however, that this can take G. too far, when momentary metaphorical likenesses form the basis for shaky larger claims. For example, on 2.3 *maestum ac sollicitum est cantoris morte Tigelli*, G. takes up Fraenkel’s (E. Fraenkel, *Horace*, Oxford 1957, 76) ‘the motley company [...] forms itself, as it were, [...] into a kind of funeral procession’ with ‘This is the stylistic equivalent of the troupes of satyrs who brought up the rear at Roman funerals and parodied the serious part of the procession (D.H. *RA* 7.71-2): a spondaic and elision-heavy line dignifies the rabble who stain a time-honoured Roman institution’. Cf. 1-2, and ‘Tigellius’ funeral’, pp. 87, 89. Dionysius is the only evidence for these satyrs. The funeral and satyrs arrive via a perceptive critic’s simile (doubly qualified), but they are here to stay.

G. succeeds in her second aim too. Given the spectacular burgeoning of good work on Horace’s *Satires* since the early 1990s, not to mention Latin literature in general over a longer period, the book is a miracle of compression, which nonetheless allows generous quotation from others. The bold paradigm shift does make the commentary a hostage to fashion, though. What then is distinctive about G.’s reading of *Satires I*? Her Horace is elusive and teasing. She says rightly that ‘it is hard to sum up just what *Satires I* is about’. Horace’s ‘unassuming manner and easy self-presentation’ are hard ‘to take at face value’ (1). Some of her dominant themes are ‘generic stock-taking’, Horace’s manipulation of ethical positions, ‘a new dawn of civil interaction clouded by continued suspicion and envy’ and ‘inclusiveness that is also exclusiveness’ (2). Aspects of these themes are further explored in the informative, dense and suggestive Introduction (a welcome, but too brief, addition is section 7, on the afterlife of the *Satires*). This also introduces the reader to ‘trade mark’ topics that will be developed further in

the separate introductions to individual satires and finally in the notes. The introductory essays, which draw together the results of the commentary proper, and the notes too, are so full of ideas that it is hard to summarise or select.

Particularly striking are various ‘allegories of reading’ or ‘coded applications’ (see 59), e.g. *Satires I* as the story of Horace’s formation, in 1.3 ‘the prehistory is a prehistory of satire’ (121), 1.5 revisits the ‘origins of native satire’ (17), and in it, too, mutilated characters anticipate narrative curtailment (186). What distinguishes G.’s way of reading is not simply that it is transversal, putting enormous weight on the metaphors, coincidences and echoes assembled from within the collection, from Horace’s oeuvre, and beyond, but rather the ingenuity and boldness of some of the juxtapositions, e.g. the characterisation of 10.9–15 as ‘a brief recipe for modern satire’ (cf. *sat.* 2.4) allows the parallel at 9 *brevitate ... currat* of *sat.* 2.4.27–9 on sorrel (*brevis*), ‘a food that unclogs the guts’, but none from the *Ars Poetica*, though G. also calls the passage a ‘theoretical outline’.

G. works very hard on proper names, a controversial issue in satire: e.g. 1.95 *Vmmidius* (explanations involve *nummi* and *medius*); 1.101–2 *Nomentanus* (*Nomen-tanus*: ‘could also be a joke on the rejection of named abuse ... in favour of a quasi-anonymous ‘man with the name’); 1.120 *Crispinus* (*Crispini + lippi* a cryptogram of *Chrysippus*); 2.36 *Cupiennius* (*sic* Cic. *Att.* 16.16^d, ‘blending *cupere* ‘to desire’ with *Ennius*, anticipating the direct Ennian quotation in 37–8); 6.19–20 ‘P. Decius Mus was a famous *novus homo*, cos. 340. Although his *cognomen* is omitted here, a contrast might be intended between *Mus* (‘mouse’) and 30 *Barrus* (‘elephant’), in this fable of a cat (Horace) looking at a king (Maecenas). The cognomen may be earlier than the introduction into Latin of *barrus* ‘elephant’ (Hor. *epod.* 12.1), but that does not preclude play on the meaning. Names of places are pressed into service too: 5.94–5 *rubus* [94 *Rubos*] means ‘bramble’ or ‘blackberry’, suggesting that *carpentes* ... is more than a dead metaphor’.

G. is a brilliant critic. How is she as a commentator? She is not very interested in the technicalities of language and style (given very little space in Intro. 6. Style and metre). Students will be well advised to seek their grammatical and syntactical explanations from Brown (e.g. 4.39 *dederim* (potential): ‘a cautious assertion, therefore perf. [?]', cf. 1.78–9; 5.91 ‘*ditior* depends on *aquae* [?]), and scholars their comments on diction and bold constructions from Kiessling-Heinze. G. is more interested in word play (anagrams, quasi-etymology, puns) and sound play: e.g. 1.3 *contentus ... sequentes* (half-rhyming); 1.95ff. echoes of the sound of Ummidius’ name; 5.96 *postera tempestas* (a ‘mini-chiasmus’); 10.59 *si quis pedibus quid claudere senis* (‘a possible pun on *claudere* ‘close’ and *claudus* ‘lame’ and one on *senis* ‘six’ and *senis* ‘of an old man’). Still on language, some pronouncements seem dogmatic without evidence, e.g. 3.97–8 *iusti prope*

mater et aequi ('*mater*, a daring metaphor'), but fairly frequent in Cicero *de moribus*, and, closest, *Rep.* 3.23.

For me commentaries are about evidence. What I learnt from writing one was how shaky that evidence turns out to be. G. deftly presents parallels from the known stock, and adds telling new ones. Owing to her greater interest in criticism and interpretation, however, she tends to hover at our shoulder telling us what to think a little too much. G. speculates with confidence, with different degrees of persuasiveness. A statement in the introduction to *sat.* 9, p. 282, made me wonder what it was based on: 'The progress of the ill-matched pair [Horace and the pest] through the streets of Rome [how far they walked together is very unclear] parodies an ancient ritual in which legal opponents walked to court together'. Later, on 9.36, a quotation from Cloud (D. Cloud, "Satirists and the Law", in S. H. Braund [ed.], *Satire and Society in Ancient Rome*, Exeter 1989, 66) turned out to be the source. Reading this in its original context enables one to see that the 'ancient ritual' has come adrift from Cloud's, which was rather the 'archaic ritual seizure' and haling to court of the defendant by the plaintiff. Cloud says this was superseded by bail in the first century BC, and that then all that remained was the walk of the plaintiff and the defendant together from their meeting place to the praetor's tribunal.

I have found many of the notes provocative. Some I would wish to correct. Here are a few examples from *sat.* 1.9 (where the commentary makes nice use of parallels from Terence): 9.13 *uicos, urbemque laudaret*. 'He [H.] turns a blind eye to Octavian's building programme'. If the *Satires* were published around 36/5 BC there would not have been much building to see that was connected with Octavian himself, apart from the temple on the Palatine (just begun). G. mentions, besides this, recent restoration or work in progress on the Regia, the Basilica Aemilia, and the Villa Publica. These rather are products of mid-triumviral competition between leading Caesarians and Antonians. The elephant in the Forum (near the temple of Vesta) is the temple of Divus Iulius (voted 42, begun (?), dedicated 29 BC, built by Octavian alone). The point is exaggerated in the introduction to the satire on p. 281: 'H. underplays the full impact of Octavian's revolutionary takeover though literal *praeteritio*, ignoring all the new monuments on his route ...' [See D. Palombi, *Roma*, in *Enciclopedia Oraziana*, Rome 1996, I, 533-53 and S. L. Dyson and R. E. Prior, "Horace, Martial, and Rome: two poetic outsiders read the ancient city", *Arethusa* 28, 1995, 245-63.]; 18 Caesar's gardens: not actually 'on the Janiculum', as far as can be seen, but on the side of the river in the southern part of Trastevere, hence much further away; 48 *uiuitur*: the report of Fraenkel's comment (116) is unintelligible without reference to what he wrote. To say it 'presumes ... the first person pl.' is misleading. True, his text had *uiuimus*, but his 'different ring' has nothing to do with this, being based on his perception of strong negative

expression, which is also what he meant by the 'superlatives' mentioned in G.'s note on 49-50.

G. bases her text on the 1959 Teubner edition of F. Klinger and different readings are listed on pp. 27-8 (correct 2.82 to 2.81 and 9.47-51 to 9.47-52). Choices worth signaling are: 1.81 *affixit*, 2.38 *moechos*, 2.81 *tuo*, 3.65 *molestus*:, 4.70 *sum*, 102 *atque animo, prius ut*, 6.66 *alioquin* (why?), 8.29 *manibus*, 9.30 *mota diuina anus urna*, 9.47-52 (*dispeream ... suus* given to 'Horace', and note the emphatic *inquam* marks a climax), 9.48 *uiuatur*, 10.37 *diffindit*, 10.68 *dilatus*. From these I prefer *molestus* to be taken with the following line (3.65-6) and *uiuimus* to *uiuatur* (9.48).

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