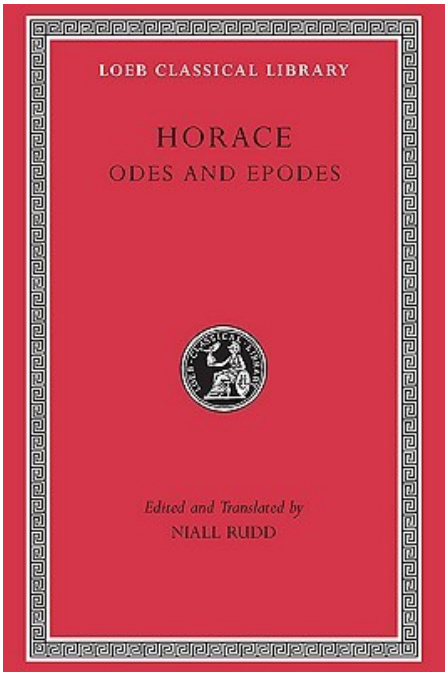

Odes and Epodes

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The poetry of Horace (born 65 bc) is richly varied, its focus moving between public and private concerns, urban and rural settings, Stoic and Epicurean thought. Here is a new Loeb Classical Library edition of the great Roman poet's Odes and Epodes, a fluid translation facing the Latin text. Horace took pride in being the first Roman to write a body of lyric poetry. For models he turned to Greek lyric, especially to the poetry of Alcaeus, Sappho, and Pindar; but his poems are set in a Roman context. His four books of odes cover a wide range of moods and topics. Some are public poems, upholding the traditional values of courage, loyalty, and piety; and there are hymns to the gods. But most of the odes are on private themes: chiding or advising friends; speaking about love and amorous situations, often amusingly. Horace's seventeen epodes, which he called iambi, were also an innovation for Roman literature. Like the odes they were inspired by a Greek model: the seventh-century imabic poetry of Archilochus. Love and political concerns are frequent themes; here the tone is generally that of satirical lampoons. In his language he is triumphantly adventurous, Quintilian said of Horace;

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Hymn for a New Age
Epodes

Odes and Epodes Details

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From Reader Review Odes and Epodes for online ebook

AGamarra says

"¿Para qué el enorme pino y el blanco chopo gustan de unir sus ramas en hospitalaria sombra? ¿Para qué el agua fugaz se abre camino, trepidante, por el quebrado arroyo? Manda que traigan vino, perfumes y encantadoras rosas -flores en demasía pasajeras-, mientras lo permiten tu patrimonio, tu edad y los negros hilos de las tres hermanas."
Lo que más sé y recuerdo de Roma son sus grandes batallas y héroes denodados como Marco Antonio, Julio César, Régulo, Escipión entre otros. Pero existe un lado de la Roma clásica menos estentórea, la de la vida del poblador común, del "hombre libre" tan grande orgullo del romano, de sus fiestas, de sus costumbres, de su amor por la patria y sus bondades, por sus sufrimientos amorosos particulares.
Por algo Horacio es llamado el maestro del corazón humano, sus Odas y épodos tienen una familiaridad y sencillez que parece que en tono paternal aconseja a sus amigos (como Mecenas) y a la juventud Romana con el famoso "carpe diem", vivamos el instante, no preocupándonos del porvenir y brindando con vino con los amigos. Habla al joven enamorado o critica a la mujer voluble de la manera más coloquial, pero también algunas Odas hablan de celebrar los triunfos de su emperador Augusto con el estilo clásico de Píndaro, recurriendo a temas mitológicos.
Horacio evidentemente toma muchos aspectos de líricos griegos que lo han precedido, no me pareciera que sea un gran fundador en la lírica como sostienen algunos, tampoco la verdad los temas tratados por él son de mi completo agrado, pero sí he aprendido mucho de la sociedad romana, de sus costumbres, de su vida diaria, de sus enemigos fieros. Y la soltura y talento con el que lo hace sí me gustó.

Jan Peter van Kempen says

Nice translations, unfortunately without the Latin text (which can be found here: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/t...).

Mrs. Bunny says

3.5

Drew says

This was my first exposure to the entirety of Horace’s odes and epodes. I’d encountered snippets before, such as “carpe diem” (1.11) and “dulce et decorum est pro patria mori” (3.2). The latter I came across when reading Wilfred Owen’s World War I poem “Dulce et Decorum est”, in which he rightfully called Horace’s phrase the “old Lie”.

I really enjoyed Odes 1.6, 3.1, 3.3 and 4.9. The last (“ne forte credas”) was really interesting, talking about immortality through writing. I love lines 25-28: “Many heroes lived before Agamemnon, / but all are oppressed in unending night, / unwept, unknown, because they lack / a dedicated poet.”

The introduction by Betty Radice and the Notes by Shepherd were helpful and most welcome. I liked Radice quoting from Byron's Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, where he wrote "Then farewell, Horace, whom I hated so…" (p.36; Canto IV.LXXV in Byron). In a note to that stanza, Byron added "I wish to express that we become tired of the task before we can comprehend the beauty; that we learn by rote before we can get by heart; that the freshness is worn away, and the future pleasure and advantage deadened and destroyed" (p. 37; Note 40 in Byron). A valid commentary, for then and now, on teaching foreign languages and literature.

Except for the few odes I highlighted, I wasn't particularly taken with this translation. At first, I wondered if it was just Horace I didn't like. So, I checked two other translations, one by Philip Francis (revised by H.J. Pye, 1806) and select odes by Lord Derby (1862). I found I liked both of those translations better than Shepherd's version. Further, looking as best I could at the original Latin, I enjoyed those too.

So, I am sure I will return to Horace, in translation mostly but will also try to dig a little deeper into some of the odes in Latin.

Eilidh says

Two days before the exam....nice

Francis Thompson says

First time I have ever read Horace. I was absolutely riveted all the way through! And I grew up despising poetry of any kind. Long may Horace be read.

Emily says

"I have built a monument more long-lasting than bronze
and set higher than the pyramids of kings.
It cannot be destroyed by gnawing rain
or wild north wind, by the procession

of unnumbered years or by the flight of time."

(III.XXX.i-v)

Big fan. I studied Horace a bit in school and wrote a dissertation about themes of time and transience in his poetry. I impressed myself with my volume of mythological knowledge! (Was that from eight years' school study of Latin ... or reading Percy Jackson? Maybe both.) I especially enjoyed Volume 4, which is all about time.

"The cold melts in the Zephyrs, Summer tramples on the heels
of Spring, and will die the moment
Autumn laden with fruit pours out her crops, and soon
sluggish Winter comes running back."

(IV.VII.ix-xii)

Mike says

When reading Horace’s odes and epodes, I didn’t have the same sense of wonder and connection with the poet as I did when reading his epistles and satires. Whereas those other works focused on everyday encounters, these poems are epic, celebratory, and more overtly politically charged (i.e., propaganda for the Augustan empire), especially Books I through III.

Only in Book IV did Horace return to the the personal poetry that strikes such a chord with me. In this book, he is an old man (although only 50!) looking back on his life, coming to terms with his impending advanced age, giving one final nod to his old friends, and experiencing love for one last time -- not the lusty, careless love of youth, but a more mature love that recognizes death as the ultimate harbinger of lost love.

Book IV was almost good enough to make me raise my rating to four stars, but the epodes and early books just didn’t hold my interest. That being said, I gladly esteem Book IV along with the Satires and Epistles as some of my favorite poetry of the classical world.

Eadweard says

Some were pastoral, some dealt with the gods, others were about war or in praise of mighty Augustus or Horace's BFF Maecenas. For the most part the translation was fine but twice he scared me by using "spic and span" and "shanghai'd", luckily, he didn't go in that direction again...

Alan says

Not salacious enough for my Latin taste: I prefer Ovid (esp Ars Amatoria and Remedia Amoris) as did Shakespeare, I believe, and Martial as did Byron but not his mother. Rousseau in his Discours sur les Sciences blames my favorites for the decline of Rome from the "cradle of virtue to the theater of crime"(see my rev).
You can't accuse Horace of sumptuous corruption in taste, though you might accuse him of beginning what Wilfred Owen, dying in WWI called, the Old Lie: "Dulce'et decorum'st pro patria mori." It is most fitting, even sweet--to die for one's country. (Odes Bk III. #2, line 13) Horace reasons in the next line, "Death overtakes even the man who flees the battle, getting him in the back."
Though not witty enough (even, as Rousseau says of my Ovid and Martial, obscene enough) for my taste, Horace's Odes are undeniably great, especially his use of nineteen different poetic forms, and meters no longer used, meters which make his verse easy enough to memorize that Maj. Fermor and the German general they captiured on Crete knew Horace's, Vides ut alta stet nive candidum, I.9. The German general, looking at snow capped Mt Ida, said the first line, and the British commando Major in a German uniform said the rest of the entire ode. The German general looked the Major in the eyes, and the war had ceased for a moment--like the famous Christmas truce.

You see how high piled the white mountain
stands snowed in; no longer even trying,

branches yield their burdens, icy
rivers harden, freezing wicked.
Burn up this freeze, these logs above the fire
piled high; and yet more liberally, my friend,
uncork that fine provincial wine
I've saved for four years bottled.
Leave all else to gods, who once
they still the brawling winds and waves,
maybe then the old cypress
and mountain ash no longer shake.
What's to be tomorrow, just forget it.
Whatever Fate gives you for days,
chalk 'em up for gain, nor spurn
sweet loves and dances, boy,
while ice-white hair neglects to snow,
and roots are green. Now go and seek
the park and square and whispers low
below the night, late hide and seek--
Now too, the squealer on the hidden girl,
her pleasing squeal itself, from private nook,
and something snatched from her...say, arm,
or finger, which resists so fiercely.
(my trans, 1968)

Later in Book I Horace exhorts wine-drinking and dancing, in Alcaic meter,
"Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero
pulsanda tellus, nunc Saliaribus..."

Now's the time for drinking. Beat
the ground with our feet, or lie
on the couch of the gods
for our feast, my fellows.

Not sure how well Horace would sell to the crowd now, since he proclaims,
"Odi profanum vulgus et arceo," (III.#1) I hate the profane crowd, and I shun them.
But this ode is largely a defense of his retired, Sabine fields over wealth and power. And he claims to write in a kind of reverence--recall that feasting was often for a ritual purpose. The Roman countryside was sacred to him, as it was centuries later to the English country gentlemen who learned Horace in their "public" schools.

But beware, the very next ode, after his rural Sabine evocation, celebrates war, and the
Old Lie (III.#2) Sorry, Rousseau, but Ovid does not buy dying for Caesar: Soldiers and lovers both hang out all night in the rain, they both suffer. So Ovid says, "You go sweetly die for your country, I'll stay home with the girls to die for." (See my Ovid rev)

Heidi'sbooks says

I read 22 selections of Horace's Odes from this book to discuss with my online bookclub.

Evan Leach says

This book contains both the *Odes* and *Epodes* of Horace, written between about 30 and 13 b.c. 17 short poems make up the *Epodes*, which were modeled off of the poems of Archilochus. Topics include war (including some very good poems touching on the civil wars and the Roman victory at Actium), love, and abuse. The *Epodes* are proto-Augustan in the sense that they seek to glorify the Roman state and Roman ideals, but they avoid monotonously singing the praises of Fearless Leader Octavian (thankfully).

The *Odes*, which came later, do get bogged down in the dirty business of propaganda from time to time, and these tend to be the dullest poems in the collection. But there are some real gems too (such as i.vii and iv.vii), and the *Odes* contain Horace's finest work. The best of the *Odes*, which seek to replicate the great lyric poems of Greece, are truly exceptional. This book also contains the *Carmen Saeculare*, a short poem commissioned for a massive celebration of the Augustan regime in 17 b.c.

I preferred both the *Odes* and *Epodes* to Horace's other collections, the *Satires* and *Epistles*. **4.5 stars**, highly recommended to anyone interested in Latin literature.

P. says

Who does not love Horace?

I just pulled the portable Whitman off the shelf and found an old bookmark for 'Give me the Splendid, Silent Sun' which begins 'Give me etc of course, then 'with all his beams full-dazzling./Give me juicy autumnal fruit ripe and red from the orchard' etc. Not nearly as elegant and robust as Horace but there is something there. Isn't there? Maybe it's the sense of command.

Jesse says

Horace was the Pindar of the Augustan Age and perhaps willingly, but he sort of had to be if he wanted to compose poetry, and so like Shostakovich, what appears as celebration ("The Centennial Hymn") is rather to be suspected as bitter irony. Due to the fact that the irony in many of these poems is concealed about as well as an Andy Kaufman stand-up, there are many dark and obscure references, but those that shine through give a glimpse into an exceeding mastery of language and nuance. In addition, they are beautiful, short, and lend themselves to savouring, but they are tinged with the despair that craves for idiocy rather than knowledge which is the result of politically hopeless times.

Suzanne says

Stunningly beautiful. Believe the hype.