

This commentary had its genesis in a discussion about student aids (and so *OLD*, not *TLL*, is the rule, and the reader is cautioned that Norden is in German), and its origins are reflected in the (very useful) glossary of literary and others terms, the maps, and the especially detailed overview of metrics and the mechanics of scansion. The editors err on the side of generosity to the student; both ‘golden line’ and ‘antonym’ are defined. All Latin and Greek are translated, including lemmata and even most stray words (*vita* = ‘life’); this practice adds to the bulk of the book. An appendix contains a useful collection of passages from Classical literature relevant to a reading of Propertius 3. The text, is, of course, H.’s, with the apparatus placed after the main body of poems, one imagines, so as not to daunt the Propertian neophyte; one fears this practice may lead some students to minimize the importance of textual problems. The bibliography is supplemented by further reading on each elegy after the relevant notes. A brief postlude to the entire commentary discusses the beginning of Book 4.

The heart of this book is the notes, a rich treasure for students that will likely render Camps obsolete (a pity, given many of his notes exhibit a pithy wisdom that provides a good counterbalance to the discursive commentary found here). Those who dispute H.’s readings will, of course, be as unhappy with the present volume as they would be with his Oxford text and *Cynthia* (2007), though the notes are scrupulous in pointing out textual cruxes and exhibit an admirable restraint from dogmatism, even if occasionally a declarative statement in judgement of a particular reading might have benefited from a ‘perhaps’ or ‘likely’ (useful words in Propertian criticism).

The introductions to individual elegies are especially rich, and given H.’s recent major work on the poet, more advanced scholars will find items of interest in the notes that expand on the reasoning behind editorial choices from the Oxford text, often in literary directions that were outside the scope of *Cynthia*. The introduction is student-accessible, though a clearer discussion of the poet’s date and testimonia would have been desirable given the target audience. The lengthy section on the historical context is helpfully thorough and sound until the very end, where there is a brief discussion of darker relations between poets and *princeps* (Gallus, Ovid). This section is too short for the weighty issues it introduces, and the discussion of different schools of thought on the *Aeneid* is rather out of date, especially given that it is difficult to speak of a ‘current standard reading’ of the epic. The invitation of the editors for users of the volume to ‘propose alternative readings’ may be a fond hope, but student users of this book will learn much about the science of text criticism as they work through the notes. Toward this end, more help on the practice of reading a critical apparatus would have been welcome.

A particular strong point of the commentary is its introduction of Hellenistic poetry and the epigrammatic tradition to a student audience. Rhetorical devices and tropes, conventions of elegiac poetry and the many grammatical peculiarities of Propertian Latin are presented in consistently clear form. The notes would have profited from more introduction to Fedeli’s major commentary on Book 3 (1985), which otherwise would be inaccessible to the present volume’s primary audience.

H. has provided the classics world with remarkable treasures in his textual work on Propertius. The present, co-edited volume fulfils the expectation of an early title of his thesis, ‘A commentary on Propertius 3’. We can be hopeful that the happy collaboration with Morwood will be repeated for another book of elegies.

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R. THOMAS (ED.), *HORACE. ODES. BOOK IV; AND CARMEN SAECULARE*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. xii + 297. ISBN 9780521582797 (bound); 9780521587662 (paper). £60.00/US\$99.00 (bound); £23.99/US\$38.99 (paper).

Everyone who teaches Horace, whether at undergraduate or graduate level, has been looking forward to the long-awaited appearance of an accessible but scholarly English commentary on the enigmatic and (traditionally) unpopular fourth book of *Odes*. The current provision is unsatisfactory: an excellent recent commentary exists, but in scholarly Italian (Paolo Fedeli and Irma Ciccarelli, *Q. Horatii Flacci Carmina: Liber IV* (2008)); Michael Putnam offers illuminating discussions in his 1986 work, *Artifices of Eternity. Horace’s Fourth Book of Odes* (1986) but the book is not

arranged as a conventional commentary; compelling readings of individual odes can be found in major works of Horatian criticism from Fraenkel to Lowrie, but none offer a line-by-line guide of the sort appropriate for a reading class; and finally, several school commentaries, such as those by Page and Quinn, remain useful, but they are dated and unsuitable for more advanced study. The situation has surely compounded the work's unpopularity: poems that are harder to teach are less often taught and, as a result, less often the object of scholarly study.

Richard Thomas' new edition of *Odes IV* and the *Carmen Saeculare* for the Cambridge 'Green and Yellow' series is therefore welcome and it is in many respects a model of the genre: clear, thorough and judicious, packing a great deal of information into a volume of manageable length, while also offering the reader a coherent interpretation of the work as a whole. All those teaching Horace will want a copy, and will find it of great use in navigating these remarkable poems and the existing scholarship upon them. The inclusion of the *Carmen Saeculare* — which too often slips through the cracks in studies of the *Odes* — is a particular strength of T.'s book, as is the nuanced and extended treatment of the poem, which is well discussed in both introduction and commentary. Three useful appendices gather together key sources on the Secular Games of 17 B.C., doing much to contextualize not only the *Carmen Saeculare* but the public orientation of *Odes IV* as a whole.

Many other features of the commentary commend it, especially for use with advanced undergraduates or graduate students with a strong grounding in both Latin and Greek. The links made between *Odes IV* and Horace's earlier lyric are thorough and judicious; as — more unusually — are those between this late lyric work and the full range of Horatian hexameter. The erotic dream of the close of *Odes* 4.1, for instance, is compared to the comic, sordid and self-deprecating version of a similar motif at *Satires* 1.5.82–5: not a very romantic connection, but one that prompts plenty of thoughts about the varieties of Horatian self-presentation. Among the wider literary contexts, the discussion of Hellenistic Greek parallels is particularly illuminating, with plenty of illustrative quotation. (All quotations from Greek are also translated.) T.'s feel for the force of individual words is acute, and the commentary offers extended discussion of the possible associations of certain key terms and names. Further strengths include the generous and largely balanced citation of other critics, especially on contested lines or interpretations, with frequent useful pointers to longer discussions or summaries of the evidence (for instance, on the identity of the 'Vergilius' address in 4.12). The structure of these discussions generally makes T.'s own opinion plain, though on occasion students may be hard-put to grasp the implied conclusion: the commentary on *Odes* 4.5, for instance, offers a careful analysis of the unprecedented 'jingle' of –um and –o endings in lines 3–4 and the unusually rigid pattern of single-line sentences in lines 17–24. In the note on 17–24, T. suggests that the poet's own 'point of view' may emerge only in the first-person voice of the final stanzas. A subsequent note specifically on the repetition of *rura* in lines 17–18 concludes: 'Finally, the repetition may be both incompetent and deliberate (cf. 17–24n.)' That pithy formula 'incompetent and deliberate' is a provocative assessment of the style of the passage, but it is not found in the summary discussion of the poem as a whole, or even of a particular subsection. Readers sometimes have to work quite hard to add up the pieces of the commentary in this way, and to follow up their implications (not least, in this case, for our sense of the poem's sincerity).

Overall, it seems that T. does not particularly admire, and perhaps even actively dislikes, the most notorious of these odes: the outright panegyric of 4.4, 4.5, 4.14 and 4.15 in particular. He hints as much in his introduction, which quotes with approval Llewelyn Morgan's description of the *Carmen Saeculare* as a 'wholehearted endorsement of an autocrat's exercise in mass manipulation' (*TLS* 18 October 2002, p. 27). Of course T. is not alone in feeling alienated by the panegyric of Horace's late lyric. The danger is that, as well as conveying his own unease, he does not offer us a clear sense of why others have disagreed — those who appreciate this poetry are too often represented chiefly by quotations from Fraenkel, set up in such a way as to discourage us from taking them very seriously.

The moving coda to Putnam's *Artifices of Eternity* compares Horace's last lyric book to the late work of Yeats and Eliot — not in order to suggest any direct influence, but as a kind of biographical analogy for the thoughtful public poet. This kind of comparative literary imagination has much to offer *Odes IV* which has been, in the past, much better liked, used and (arguably) understood than it is today. Several of the most significant political odes of the English seventeenth century, for instance, arise from *Odes IV* — Marvell's 'First Anniversary of the Government under Oliver Cromwell' borrows elements of its structure and unusual use of focalization from *Odes* 4.4 — and

countless authors have turned to Horace's major panegyric odes when faced with the dilemma of making resonant art out of the duty of public praise. For all the strengths of his rich and discerning commentary, T. could perhaps have offered the first-time reader of *Odes* IV a fuller sense of why the most difficult of these poems have not always seemed so hard to admire.

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A. FELDHERR, *PLAYING GODS: OVID'S METAMORPHOSES AND THE POLITICS OF FICTION*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010. Pp. x + 337. ISBN 9780691138145. £34.95.

Playing Gods explores the nuanced strategy of reading that the *Metamorphoses*, according to Feldherr, stages for the contemporary Roman reader. It does so from the much less examined perspective of cultural discourses, particularly those of civic and religious spectacle and of the visual arts. F. argues that the poem operates on a 'politics of fiction' that works toward constructing a double vision, or a double reading response, as readers encounter and negotiate images of status, hierarchy, and power. For F., the proem (1.1–4) lays down the framework for this kind of response: while the promise to unfold an unbroken (*perpetuum*) history of time that links a Greek mythological past to Ovid's contemporary Rome draws the reader's attention to the narrative of metamorphosis *per se*, the poem's claim to be the result of 'fine spinning' (*deducite*), conversely, encourages the same reader to contemplate the poem as a literary and artistic artifact. The principles, or the 'politics' of fiction, that promote a simultaneous view of the *Metamorphoses* as content and form, furthermore, emerge as analogous to the principles that govern the universe in which the reader and Ovid's work exist, since, as the proem announces, all things in our world are changed into new forms by an external force (i.e. the gods). From the perspective of readers, then, the poem is a *mise-en-abîme* of our world, its workings, and hierarchies (here (p. 2) F.'s reference to the politics of fiction in Julio Cortázar's *La continuidad de los parques* (1956) is very apt).

Discussion is organized into three parts (Part One: 'Fiction and the Empire'; Part Two: 'Spectacle'; and Part Three: 'Ovid and the Visual Arts'). All the close readings, some of which are excellent (e.g. the episode of Io as a parallel between the first representation of reading in the *Metamorphoses* and the audience's task of interpreting the book as text (ch. 1); Pythagoras' view of sacrifice as a model for modes of viewing which are generated by metamorphosis (ch. 3); the clever appeal to the amphitheatre as a paradigm for grasping Ovid's narrative as imperial display (ch. 4); or the analysis of Pygmalion as a viewer, rather than a maker, of art (ch. 6)), are examined through the lens of the double vision which, F. argues, prompts readers to negotiate the complex relationship between fiction and reality in the poem. That the word 'politics' figures prominently in the subtitle of this book, is not to say, however, that its central thesis seeks to emphasize an Ovidian view of Augustus. Nor does discussion take sides on the pro- and anti-Augustan debate (and here one can argue that F. stands with Kennedy, who argues that the term 'Augustus' has become 'the point of intersection of contesting ideologies [in criticism's] control over the discourse of the past' (1992, 27)). 'The politics of *Metamorphoses* that [*Playing Gods*] addresses', F. explains, '[aims to] expand our understanding of the modes by which the work facilitates the audience's reflection on and redefinition of the hierarchies operative within Roman society' (7). Thus, for instance, when it comes to the power relations between the artist and the *princeps*, F. contends that 'the grand fictions that the poem discloses seem to be the artist's way of controlling and containing empire as well as emperor; at others', he adds, 'the comparative triviality of the artist's product is balanced by the recognition of the real status of the artist' (61). Fiction, therefore, has certain limitations in articulating hierarchy and identity for the reader, since it is both able and unable to gain the authority and presence of other discursive forms.

Methodologically speaking, F. partially complements new historicist approaches to the *Metamorphoses* (especially those of Feeney (1991) and Barchiesi (1997)) in his attempt to examine the poem, not simply from a formalistic perspective, but for its capacity to become a constituent element of the discourses of power and culture current in Augustan Rome. A departure from previous criticism, and particularly from Hardie's study of illusion *vis-à-vis* audiences (2002), can