Traditions and contexts in the poetry of Horace

This book explores the whole range of the output of an exceptionally versatile and innovative poet, from the *Epodes* to the literary-critical *Epistles*. Distinguished scholars of diverse background and interests introduce readers to a variety of critical approaches to Horace and to Latin poetry. Close attention is paid throughout to the actual text of Horace, with many of the chapters focusing on the reading of a single poem. These close readings are then situated in a number of different political, philosophical and historical contexts. The book sheds light not only on Horace but on the general problems confronting Latinists in the study of Augustan poetry, and it will be of value to a wide range of upper-level Latin students and scholars.


**Denis Feeney** is Giger Professor of Latin at Princeton University. He previously held the positions of Professor of Classics at the University of Wisconsin, Professor of Latin at the University of Bristol, and Fellow and Tutor in Classics at New College, Oxford. He is the author of *The gods in epic: poets and critics of the classical tradition* (1991) and *Literature and religion at Rome* (1998) and is a General Editor of the series Roman Literature and its Contexts, published by Cambridge University Press.
Traditions and contexts in the poetry of Horace

EDITED BY

TONY WOODMAN
UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

&

DENIS FEENEY
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
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CONTRIBUTORS


Arnold Bradshaw. Formerly Master of Van Mildert College, University of Durham, and author of articles on African languages and Greek and Latin literature.

Ian M. Le M. Du Quesnay. Lecturer in Classics in the University of Cambridge and Senior Tutor of Jesus College. Author of numerous studies of republican and Augustan poetry.


Alan Griffiths. Senior Lecturer in Greek and Latin at University College London. He is editor of Stage directions: essays in ancient drama in honour of E. W. Handley (1996), and has also published in the areas of archaic and Hellenistic poetry and Greek vase-painting.

Michèle Lowrie. Associate Professor of Classics at New York University. Author of Horace’s narrative Odes (1997) and articles on Horace, Ovid and Baudelaire.

John Moles. Professor of Latin at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Author of Plutarch: the Life of Cicero (1988) and numerous articles on Greek and Latin literature and philosophy.
Contributors


Ellen Oliensis. Associate Professor of Classics at the University of California, Berkeley. Author of *Horace and the rhetoric of authority* (1998).


PROLOGUE

In compiling this volume, we sought contributors who were known to be engaged in the field of Horatian scholarship and who, between them, seemed likely to cover most of Horace’s œuvre and to represent a variety of different approaches. We saw our editorial task as drawing conclusions in an Epilogue, highlighting the common themes of the chapters in order to draw into focus the preoccupations that contemporary Latinists bring to bear on a canonical Latin author.

Inevitably there is a degree of circularity in this procedure, since the personal preferences of individual scholars are generally well known and it is unlikely that, for example, younger scholars in one country will adopt the same approaches as a middle-aged in another. Indeed three papers, familiar from oral performance, were commissioned especially for this volume and hence were known in advance. Nevertheless one cannot make absolute predictions: it was not to be expected that two contributors would exchange topics half-way through the proceedings, and we were surprised that the final submission of another was devoted to an entirely different work of Horace’s from that stipulated on the contract.

Not every invitation to contribute to this volume was accepted, and the alacrity with which some scholars accepted was in inverse proportion to the speed with which they produced their papers. Hence there have been repeated delays, for which apologies are due to all concerned. Nevertheless we believe that the resulting volume has been well worth the wait and we hope that it may stand as a fitting complement to Homage to Horace, edited by S. J. Harrison (1995).

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D.C.F., A.J.W.
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