

NIALL RUDD, *Horace Odes and Epodes*. Loeb Classical Library LCL 33, Cambridge (Mass.) – London: Harvard University Press, 2004, 464 pp., ISBN: 0-674-99609-7.

Niall Rudd's new *Horace Odes and Epodes* replaces C. E. Bennett's long-serving workhorse Loeb. In most respects this is a much better edition. Rudd provides a fuller, more detailed introduction to Horace's work than Bennett (twelve pages against Bennett's eight) and a four-page bibliography that contains a good cross-section of commentaries, translations and studies for those who want to pursue their Horatian research beyond an initial reading. The explanatory footnotes are generous enough to explain the more difficult mythological and historical references without being obtrusive. In the metrical conspectus Rudd sensibly adopts Bennett's nomenclature since only the more advanced Latin students will need to make use of it. A few words to explain some of the symbolism, such as the slash for common word-break, might have been helpful to those who are trying to puzzle out the meters.

Rudd has adopted the Oxford text of E. C. Wickham, revised by H. W. Garrod (Oxford, 1912), for his English translation. Significant departures from the Oxford text, conjectures and variant readings are recorded at the bottom of the page or occasionally at the bottom of the facing translation page with Loeb's usual minimalist apparatus.

Loeb translations serve two rather contradictory needs: they offer fluent, accurate and accessible English for those who want to read an author quickly without regard to the text or they offer modestly literal trots for students who want help in construing the text. The needs of the first are not the needs of the second, and it is a rare Loeb that can satisfy both. Rudd assumes that his "present translation is intended to serve as a guide to the Latin printed *en face*; yet too literal a version would produce a jarring false effect; so the result

is something of a compromise” (vii). I don’t know if anyone has ever done a statistical analysis of how readers use their Loeb’s, but I suspect that more fall into my first category, those who merely want easy access to an author, than fall into the second, those who want help with the Greek or Latin. In fulfilling his chosen goal, Rudd realizes that “there can be no wholly satisfactory solution” (vii) to crafting a prose that is both readable and close to the original. Since Rudd believes that the primary purpose of his English is to serve as a guide for the Latin, it might be instructive to compare his English with C. E. Bennett’s in terms of their usefulness in understanding the Latin.

At the outset, let me say that there is one feature of his English that definitely does not serve his stated goal. He has chosen to render certain proper names and titles that might not mean anything to common readers with paraphrased English. For example, *Acroceraunia* in *carm.* 1.3.20 is translated as “Thunder Peaks” and *Hesperia* in *carm.* 2.1.32 as “Westland,” but neither the Latin nor the English terms are included in the index of names. Anyone who wondered where else “Westland” might occur in the poems would find the index useless. In fact, various forms of ‘Hesperia’ occur seven times in the *Carmina*. The paraphrases might be helpful to the ‘common’ reader who has no interest in the Latin, but they are a disservice to Rudd’s assumed audience.

As our test case, let’s take *carm.* 1.37, the famous ode on the fall of Cleopatra. While Horace begins the poem with the standard Augustan propaganda about the queen, he ends with a strangely moving testament to her courage and pride. I give Bennett’s translation first and then Rudd’s:

Now is the time to drain the flowing bowl, now with unfettered foot to beat the ground with dancing, now with Salian feast to deck the couches of the gods, my comrades! Before this day it had been wrong to bring our Caecuban forth from ancient bins, while yet a frenzied queen was plotting ruin ‘gainst the Capitol and destruction to the empire, with her polluted crew of creatures foul with lust—a woman mad enough to nurse the wildest hopes, and drunk with Fortune’s

favours. But the escape of scarce a single galley from the flames sobered her fury, and Caesar changed the wild delusions bred by Mareotic wine to the stern reality of terror, chasing her with his galleys, as she sped away from Italy, even as the hawk pursues the gentle dove, or the swift hunter follows the hare over the plains of snow-clad Thessaly, with purpose fixed to put in chains the accursed monster. Yet she, seeking to die a nobler death, showed for the dagger's point no woman's fear, nor sought to win with her swift fleet some secret shore; she even dared to gaze with face serene upon her fallen palace; courageous, too, to handle poisonous asps, that she might draw black venom to her heart, waxing bolder as she resolved to die; scorning, in sooth, the thought of being borne, a queen no longer, on hostile galleys to grace a glorious triumph—no craven woman she!

Now let the drinking begin! Now let us thump the ground with unfettered feet! Now is the time, my friends, to load the couches of the gods with a feast fit for the Salii.

Before this it was sacrilege to bring the Caecuban out from our fathers' cellars, at a time when the queen, along with her troop of disgustingly perverted men, was devising mad ruin for the Capitol and death for the empire—a woman so out of control that she could hope for anything at all, drunk, as she was, with the sweet wine of success.

But her frenzy was sobered by the survival of scarcely one ship from the flames; and her mind, crazed with Mareotic wine, was brought down to face real terror when Caesar pursued her as she flew away from Italy with oars, like a hawk after a gentle dove or a speedy hunter after a hare on the snowy plains of Thessaly, to put that monster of doom safely in chains.

Determined to die more nobly, she showed no womanly fear of the sword, nor did she use her swift fleet to gain some hidden shore. She had the strength of mind to gaze on her ruined palace with a calm countenance, and the courage to handle the sharp-

toothed serpents, letting her body drink in their black venom. Once she had resolved to die she was all the more defiant—determined, no doubt, to cheat the cruel Liburnians: she would not be stripped of her royalty and conveyed to face a jeering triumph: no humble woman she.

Both translators start forcefully, channeling the first stanza into a single sentence that captures the lively triple *nunc*, though Rudd's decision to render *pede libero/pulsanda tellus* with "let us thump the ground with unfettered feet" sounds more like a convocation of rabbits than friends dancing with joy. Both print a full stop after *ebria* in l. 12, translating the long arc from l. 5 to the full stop as a single English sentence. They diverge signally, however, in their understanding of *dum Capitolio/regina dementis ruinas/funus et imperio parabat* in ll. 6-8, with Bennett printing *dementes* for Rudd's *dementis*. Although Shackleton Bailey (*Horatius Opera*, 3rd ed. rev., 1995) is skeptical of the reading, printing *dementis* between obeli, Bennett and Rudd accept the word but construe it quite differently. Bennett properly takes *dementes* as a transferred epithet with *regina*, while Rudd rather illogically takes it with *ruinas*. Both part company again with *contaminato cum grege turpium/morbo virorum* in ll. 9-10. Bennett keeps closer to the syntax by translating the phrase "with her polluted crew of creatures foul with lust," but Rudd paraphrases so much that his English is less useful as a trot: "along with her troop of disgustingly perverted men." Rudd is however far more successful with ll. 10-2 because he properly catches the connotation of *impotens* in "a woman so out of control that she could hope for anything at all, drunk, as she was, with the sweet wine of success." Bennett entirely misses the force of *impotens* because he over-generalizes it in "a woman mad enough to nurse the wildest hopes, and drunk with Fortune's favors." Rudd's only mistake here was to translate *fortunaque* by 'success.' The ancient world knew that random, individual cases of success stemmed from the dangerous and uncertain revolutions of fortune. Fortune and success were not synonymous to them.

The next long arc of Latin text, from the full stop after *ebria* in l. 12 to the semicolon after *monstrum* in l. 21 (where Bennett puts a full stop), presents few problems to the translators. Each embraces it with a single English sentence. Rudd again is slightly more accurate with his version of ll. 13-7, which properly translates the semantic flavor of *mentemque ... redegit in veros timores/Caesar* better than Bennett, though he unnecessarily slows his English with a semicolon at the end of “But her frenzy was sobered by the survival of scarcely one ship from the flames.” On one point they again disagree. Bennett thinks that *remis* in l. 17 goes with *adurgens* in l. 18 and thus refers to Caesar’s ships, so he has Caesar “chasing her with his galleys, as she sped away from Italy.” Rudd assumes that the *remis* should be taken with *volantem* in l. 16, so “Caesar pursued her as she flew away from Italy with oars.” In this case I would say that poetic logic is clearly on Rudd’s side. The two hunting images that follow are unproblematic.

In the final arc of Latin text running from l. 21 to l. 32, Rudd continues the sentence that began after *ebria* in l. 12. He disposes the syntax into two large clauses with a semicolon after *oras* at the end of l. 24 and then inserts light commas after *sereno* in l. 26, *serpentis* in l. 27, *venenum* in l. 28 and *ferocior* in l. 29. The result is a very long, syntactically complex Latin sentence that embraces ll. 12-32 but foregrounds Cleopatra’s calm acceptance of death by segmenting the key descriptive passages in ll. 25-9. Rudd has in fact followed Shackleton Bailey’s punctuation except for his semicolon after *oras*, where the latter prints a comma. Bennett by contrast puts a full stop after *oras* and a semicolon after *ferocior*, but places segmenting commas after *sereno* in l. 26, *serpentis* in l. 27, and *venenum* in l. 28. Neither editor, however, really tracks the Latin punctuation in his translation. Rudd produces three English sentences with periods after “hidden shore” and “black venom.” The full stop after “black venom” is a severe blow to his forward momentum, which is further slowed by the interposition of the sharp parenthetical clause “determined, no doubt, to cheat the cruel Liburnians: ... triumph:”, ending with another semicolon. The jagged English is not helped by the prosaic “no doubt” for *scilicet*. Bennett equally ignores his Latin

pointing: he breaks his one long sentence into four large sections with three semicolons, but still imparts a much stronger rhythmic drive to the climax because he maintains a more coherent parallel structure in his syntax. He gives us four pithy independent clauses anchored with strong active verbs and an adjective: “showed for the dagger’s point,” “sought to win,” “dared to gaze” and “courageous, too, too handle.” “Courageous” here is a brachylogy for “she was courageous.” These independent clauses provide an effective foil for the simple present participle (“scorning”) that impels the sentence with rhetorical brio to its climax, beautifully set off with a syntactical disjunction marked by a dash.

Both translators again part ways on certain passages. The word *ensem* in l. 23 is properly a ‘sword,’ as Rudd translates it, and not “the dagger’s point” that Bennett makes it. Rudd is clearly more precise, though rather flat and prosaic, in translating *asperas...serpentis* in ll. 26-7 as “sharp-toothed serpents” against Bennett’s traditional “poisonous asps” and in having Cleopatra’s body drink the venom against Bennett’s romantic picture of the asps drawing “black venom to her heart.” He properly translates “Liburnians,” while Bennett resorts to the vague “hostile galleys.” His translation of *humilis* with the cognate English word ‘humble’ encapsulates one connotation of the Latin, but Bennett’s ‘craven’ is even more powerful and equally correct in highlighting another more memorable connotation.

Rudd’s English is on balance more neutral, spare and accurate than Bennett’s with its mix of *th* pronouns, archaisms and occasional biblicalese, especially in what Rudd calls the ‘hymnic’ odes. Rudd considers the effect “old-fashioned” (vii), which it is by any practical measure. Bennett, however, often displays a superior ear in phrasing his musical English. Throughout 1.37, for example, he discovered some very expressive alliteration: “drunk with fortune’s favors”; “the escape of scarce a single galley”; “sought with her swift fleet some secret shore”; “scorning, in sooth, the thought of being borne, a queen no longer, on hostile galleys to grace a glorious triumph.”

The replacement of older translations with newer ones will take quite some time given the conflicting demands placed on the translator. We shall therefore continue to live for several

—and perhaps even many— decades with a strange amalgam of English in the Loeb Classical Library, an amalgam that includes the elegant if dated music of Victorian prose and the more austere harmony of modern prose.

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