range of information on Lucan's snake-episode is laudable, but readers will have to watch their step when using his text and commentary.

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SATIRIC VOICES

K. FREUDENBURG: *Satires of Rome: Threatening Poses from Lucilius to Juvenal*. Pp. xviii + 289. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Paper, £17.95 (Cased, £47.50). ISBN: 0-521-00621-X (0-521-80357-8 hbk).

No review can do full justice to the wealth of sophisticated and provocative ideas put forth in this volume with remarkable clarity of expression and unfailing wit that owes much to John Henderson.

If I were to offer a conventional description of F.'s study of Roman verse satire, I would say that it is predictably divided into three very long chapters (one on Horace, one on Persius, and one on Juvenal) with helpful sub-sections that discuss a particular satire or group of satires, and that its aim is to explain the shifts in the development of Roman verse satire by taking it out of the margins of Roman literary history and by placing it not only in relation to the concepts of identity and self-understanding of the Roman reader, but also in the centre of the cultural and political events of the times in which Horace, Persius, and Juvenal were writing. F. realizes his aim through a close reading of the majority of the satiric output of the above authors, and the conversational and jargon-free style he employs while guiding the reader through each poem is reminiscent of the informal and relaxed style Horace was using to convey his message to his audience (and make them agree with him). A list of key dates for the study of Roman verse satire and a glossary of key names and technical terms give the impression that this book aims at a wide audience. Almost all Latin and Greek extracts are translated.

But the conventional description I offer above is inadequate, for F. achieves much more than that. The unseen but strongly felt presence in F.'s discussion of the social-historical issues raised in the poems he analyses is Lucilius, and all the chapters of this book focus on how each of these three verse-satirists deals with the image of the politically outspoken and socially formidable Lucilius as the originator of the genre, and with the implications of the decision to write satire of the Lucilian kind in an era that would not look kindly upon or even tolerate such literary initiatives. So for 'Chapter 1: Horace' read 'Chapter 1: Horace *and Lucilius*', for 'Chapter 2: Persius' read 'Chapter 2: Persius *and Lucilius*', and so on.

Is the speaker in the so-called 'diatribes' of Horace's first book of satires a convincing Epicurean or a mere parasite, whose view of life undermines the validity of any serious messages projected out of these poems? Is Horace, the Callimachean satirist, better than Lucilius? If not, why is it important to point out that losing to Lucilius is more telling than defeating him? If Horace fails in his rôle as satirist in the Lucilian arena, are *we* more successful in our rôle as alert readers avoiding the traps Horace has set in his ostensibly amusing poems about the witch-hags and 'the pest'? How does it feel writing a second book of satires shortly after the events at Actium? What are the powers that exert such pressure on Persius that his satirical voice, filled with Horatian reminiscences, comes out so vitriolic, disillusioned, and introspective?

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What do we learn about ourselves, if we choose to follow Persius' example of embarking on a philosophical *katabasis* into ourselves in order to find 'the Nero within us'? Is Persius' Neronian Rome telling us more about Persius than about Nero? Why is Juvenal's rage so extreme, and why has it not manifested itself earlier than this? Why is it revealing to play the loud and aggressive music of Juvenal next to the more understated melodies of Tacitus and Pliny?

The above questions are some of the issues F. raises with refreshing lucidity and respect to the texts of Horace, Persius, and Juvenal and their various intertexts (Pindar, Callimachus, Ennius, Lucilius, Lucretius, and Virgil, to name but a few). F. does not always answer the questions he asks, but this I found to be one of the stimulating aspects of his project. This book requires a lot of patience (I lost mine on a couple of occasions because of some puns: see, for instance, p. 20) and a lot of concentration. Its chatty sentence-construction makes it easy to follow, but beneath the surface the argument is extremely elaborate and sophisticated. The highlight of the book was, for me, the section on Horace's first book of satires: brilliantly precise and detailed, it clearly demonstrates how effectively F. discusses Horace's poems as individual works *and* as part of a larger collection comprising poems linked with each other and situated in a cultural–political context (however, I was sorry that F. did not discuss the implications of the fact that, even though Horace constructs [at least] the final scene of Satire 1.9 as a mime-play, he proceeds—at the beginning of 1.10—to criticize Laberius, the most successful mimographer of Horace's time). Regrettably, this impression of overall analysis is not given in the sections on Persius and Juvenal, where F. had to be much more selective in his choice of material for scrutiny.

But F. has already given us a lot of food for thought. Having finished reading his book, I found myself, alarmingly enough, both considering whether or not I had fallen into one of Horace's subtle traps, and reassuring myself that I had not been fooled by Juvenal's 'revenge-performance'. What does this say about me? At this point, the cover illustration showing a detail from Ferreti's *Harlequin as Painter* became disconcertingly and embarrassingly relevant.

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PERSIUS COMMENTED IN LATIN

H. NIKITINSKI: *A. Persius Flaccus:* Saturae. *Commentario atque indice rerum notabilium instruxit Helgus Nikitinski. Accedunt varia de Persio iudicia saec. XIV–XX* (Sammlung wissenschaftlicher Commentare). Pp. 365. Munich and Leipzig: K. G. Saur, 2002. Cased, €64. ISBN: 3-598-74293-2.

Persius is difficult, and assistance in reading him is always welcome. Nikitinski is a careful Latinist and generally limits himself to matters of Latinity, explaining Persius' strange vocabulary and syntax, often providing intelligible paraphrases for what is by no means clear in Persius. He aims at utility rather than originality, and relies heavily on one dominant source: in the first ten pages of commentary, I found only two notes containing material not in W. Kissel (ed.), *Aules Persius Flaccus: Satiren* (Heidelberg, 1990), one of which is completely irrelevant. Since Kissel's commentary is both

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