Perceptions of Horace: A Roman Poet and His Readers


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Abstract

Throughout his work, the Roman poet Horace displays many, sometimes conflicting, faces: these include dutiful son, expert lover, gentleman farmer, man about town, outsider, poet laureate, sharp satirist and measured moraliser. This book features a wide array of essays by an international team of scholars from a number of different disciplines, each one shedding new light on aspects of Horace's poetry and its later reception in literature, art and scholarship from antiquity to the present day. In particular, the collection seeks to investigate the fortunes of 'Horace' both as a literary personality and as a uniquely varied textual corpus of enormous importance to western culture. The poems shape an author to suit his poetic aims; readers reshape that author to suit their own aesthetic, social and political needs. Studying these various versions of Horace and their interaction illuminates the author, his poetry and his readers.
Horace became a renowned poet in ancient Rome due to his refreshingly sardonic and sarcastic style. Persius, who had also been a Satirist in ancient Rome, praised Horace's style in effusive terms. Some of his most distinguished works include 'Odes', 'The Art Of Poetry' and Satires. Horace was indeed a man of dry wit and a great sense of humor. Many of his words have become quite famous as his quotes and thoughts and are quoted extensively. His thoughts and quotations tackle the most serious and sensitive topics in a lighter tone. Here are few of Horace's notable quotes and sayings. The influence of the Roman poet Horace on Ben Jonson has often been acknowledged, but never fully explored. Portions of Chapter 1 are developed from work first published in 'Versions of Victory: Ben Jonson and the Pindaric Ode', The International Journal of the Classical Tradition, and 'The Poet's Voice: Allusive Dialogue in Ben Jonson's Horatian Poetry', in Luke Houghton and Maria Wyke (eds.), Perceptions of Horace: a Roman Poet and His Readers (Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 219–38.