

Watson, Lindsay C. **A Commentary on Horace's Epodes**. Oxford, 2003. 604p
bibl index afp ISBN 0-19-925324-2, \$150.00. Reviewed in 2004sep CHOICE.

With this massive commentary on 17 of Horace's earlier, less-celebrated poems, Watson (University of Sydney, Australia) puts serious students of the Roman poet forever in his debt; no one need ever again attempt a commentary on this scale of this particular collection of poetry (which runs to only 625 lines). Watson's models are the similarly exhaustive commentaries by R.G.M. Nisbet (his teacher) and Margaret Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace: Odes, Book 1* (CH, Jan'71) and ... *Book 2* (CH, Apr'79). This means he pays special attention to identifying sources and parallels, both Greek and Latin, consistently quotes them at some length, and assesses their significance within the *Epodes*. Watson scrupulously addresses matters of semantics, rhetorical nuance, poetic structure and imagery, and textual criticism and meter and also discusses the historical and social milieu of the poems. Every line, often every word in every line, is examined. The combination of enormous erudition and a fine literary sensibility makes Watson's book a triumph of Horatian scholarship. Although most undergraduates will find the excellent, somewhat shorter commentary in David Mankin's edition of *Horace's Epodes*, (CH, Jun'96) more accessible, professional classicists will be most grateful for this indispensable new scholarly tool.

Summing Up: Essential. Ambitious undergraduates, graduate students, researchers, and faculty.

— J. P. Holoka, *Eastern Michigan University*