

Nisbet, R.G.M., and Niall Rudd. **A Commentary on Horace: Odes, Book III.** Oxford, 2004. 389p indexes afp ISBN 0-19-926314-0, \$130.00. Reviewed in 2005feb CHOICE.

With this book, Nisbet and Rudd complete a series of three magisterial commentaries begun by Nisbet and Margaret Hubbard (CH, Jan'71 and Apr'79) on the three books of Horace's masterpiece of collected *Odes* (a fourth book of odes appeared separately). Horace merits the detail of comment provided here (about 12 pages per poem) for several reasons. His work, like that of many Roman poets, is highly allusive, deftly evoking images and adapting verbal and metrical rhythms in forerunners both Greek (Archilochus, Alcaeus, Sappho, Pindar, Callimachus) and Latin (most notably Catullus and Vergil). In addition, Horace's poetry has exerted massive influence right from its first appearance. Later poets have emulated him; readers ancient and modern have cherished celebrated poems, lines, and phrases ("carpe diem"; "dulce et decorum est"); critics have endlessly scrutinized and admired his artistry. The principal triumph of the Nisbet-Hubbard-Rudd commentaries is that they both delineate this referential or intertextual richness through judiciously selected quotations and painstakingly clarify particulars of the sound and sense of the *Odes*. This third volume matches its predecessors in deploying an awesome erudition in the service of sensitive and precise literary analysis.

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

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