
Am Anfang seines Artikels über die lyrische Dichtung führt Alessandro Barchiesi einige interessante und überraschende Beispiele für die Rezeption des Horaz an: die Ode Auf ein Geschütz (1782) des bekannten Übersetzers Karl Wilhelm Ramlter ("The Prussian Horace") und das Gedicht Dulce et decorum est von Wilfred Owen (1917), wo die horazische Phrase als Lüge bezeichnet wird.


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As the title says, the most integral part of this book is Stuart Lyons' full verse English translation of Horace's Odes. In addition, the book contains brief chapters on Horace's life and the Augustan age, Horace as a songwriter and the hypothesis that Guido d'Arezzo exploited the melody of Horace's Ode to Phyllis, when he invented the solmization system also known as "Guido's hexachord".

This book begins with Horace's biography, which also throws some light on the background of the Odes. Lyons then turns his attention to the question of whether Horace was also a composer of songs. He highlights the hypothesis that Horace's Odes were originally songs, as is also suggested by the title "Carmina", and not just poems, as was the common belief in the twentieth century. Lyons also wants to point out that Horace was not musically illiterate, basing his statements mainly on the references to music and musical instruments that occur in the Odes. The author further gives a brief account about ancient Greek music theory, which unfortunately oversimplifies, for example, the use of modes in different genera. Lyons also commits a slight solecism when he erroneously describes barbiton as "a smaller instrument more like a lute" (p. 21), thus confusing it with a pandoura (also known as a trichordon), the only lute-like instrument known from ancient Greece. All in all, it seems that Horace had some kind of musi-
cal education – as did the Greek lyric poets – although this book does not prove it indisputably.

The chapter entitled "Guido d'Arezzo and the Do-re-mi Mystery" deals with the origin of the melody used in the hymn Ut queant laxis, which was the song where Guido d'Arezzo took the syllables Ut-Re-Mi-Fa-Sol-La to signify the notes of the basic diatonic scale. Lyons' premise is that Guido's source was Horace's the Ode to Phyllis, but he does not claim that the melody in question was composed by Horace himself. He bases his hypothesis on the manuscript known to scholars as M425, which includes the Ode to Phyllis with neume notation. It must be noted that Lyons is not the original discoverer of the fact that the ode in M425 and Ut queant laxis are sung with the same melody (as he also admits on p. 222), this having been noticed much earlier (Lyons refers to Gerard Abraham's The Concise Oxford History of Music [1985], p. 84, but omits, for example, J. A. Westrup's "Medieval Song" in The New Oxford History of Music II. Early Medieval Music Up to 1300 [1954], pp. 220–1). The author is convinced that the melody of the Ode to Phyllis is the source that Guido used, when he invented the solmization system, because M425 is the only known early medieval manuscript containing the same melody as that used in Ut queant laxis. He also suggests that the reason why Guido does not mention that he employs the melody used in one of Horace's Odes is that, because of the pressures of religious politics, it would not have been proper to use such a profane melody in religious music. After this thought-provoking enigma, Lyons introduces his translation of the Odes.

The English verse translation is aimed at students without a developed understanding of Latin. Lyons mostly uses English metrical and rhyming schemes, but also "an anglicised version of Horace's Sapphics" on some occasions and reflects the original Ionic a minore metre in the Ode to Neobule. In general, he puts weight on the requirements of English rhyme and does not follow the original text slavishly. Lyons also consciously uses anachronisms, for example, when translating cithara as 'guitar' and tibia as 'flute', because of their convenience for English rhyming (p. 43). Similarly, he translates barbiton as 'lute', which might explain why he earlier (p. 21) falsely describes this lyre-like instrument as lute-like. Generally, Lyons takes a lot of liberties with Horace's original text, omitting also some proper names and place names as insignificant. His translation probably will not please those who prefer literal translations, but it makes Horace's Odes easier to approach for people without any previous knowledge of Roman history and literature.

In summary, the book functions best as a tool for beginners in Classics to become acquainted with Horace's Odes and his life. The chapter on the origin of the melody of Ut queant laxis is well written and grippingly told, but does not provide any firm evidence to support Lyons' claim that Guido d'Arezzo (or someone else who originally merged the verses written by Paul the Deacon with the melody in question) took the melody precisely from the Ode to Phyllis. Also his hypothesis that Guido kept the origin of the melody secret because of religious politics is unconvincing. Perhaps it would be more reasonable to ask if Guido did not mention the origin of the melody simply because in his time it was so commonly known and widely used. It is unlikely that these two songs were the only ones with this melody. However, even Lyons does not claim that Horace himself would have been the composer of the melody that is found in M425, and it is evident that there is no connection between the actual music that Horace could have written and Guido's invention of the solmization system.

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