

Johnson, Timothy S. **Horace's iambic criticism: casting blame (Iambikē Poiēsis)**. Brill, 2012. 314p bibl indexes afp (Mnemosyne. Supplements, 334); ISBN [9789004215238](#), \$163.00. Reviewed in 2012may CHOICE.

Johnson (College of Charleston) has written extensively on Horace, with originality: this book in the Mnemosyne series of "supplements" to Greek and Latin begins with an iambic-like "personal introduction," invoking Horace's praxis. (Endnotes rich enough to spark articles and influence pedagogy follow.) The author concludes with "An Iambic Post-Lude," in which he recapitulates the book's insights into false fronts, destruction, and derision. In between, he dissects what his subtitle proclaims iambs (and critics) do--cast blame. His blame falls on readers who miss Horace's strategies and subtexts. In re-visioning Horace's iambic mode, Johnson expresses indebtedness to J. K. Newman's analysis of the genre's origin in "ritual laughter," and he salutes Horace for spinning social criticism from predecessors, whose lines are generally missing. Works by, translations of, and commentaries on Horace now fill the shelves. Sidney Alexander published his translation, *The Complete Odes and Satires of Horace* (CH, Oct'99, 37-0758); Johnson wrote *A Symposium of Praise* (CH, Dec'05, 43-2022); and Lindsay Watson published his *Commentary on Horace's Epodes* (CH, Sep'04, 42-0144). Johnson's book joins those. It is a model of judicious thinking about Horace's use of "rage," "symptotic anxiety," "re/cantations," "consonances," and dissonances. For Johnson, Horace offers hope for Rome after chaotic civil war. **Summing Up:** Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates and above. -- *R. H. Solomon, formerly, University of Alberta*