

BOOK REVIEW

Ten Fairy Tales in Latin. By PAULA CAMARDELLA TWOMEY and SUZANNE NUSS-BAUM. Mundelein: Bolchazy-Carducci, 2013. Pp. viii + 127. Paperback, \$19.00. ISBN: 978-0-86516-791-9.

T*en Fairy Tales in Latin* is a charming addition to the library of books designed to introduce advanced elementary and beginning intermediate students to longer passages of Latin prose without adapting the actual work of Latin authors. The ten fairy tales include some of the most popular and well-known stories that students are likely to recognize, such as *Auricomia et Ursi Tres* (Goldilocks and the Three Bears), *Cinerellula* (Cinderella), *Tres Porcelli* (Three Little Pigs), and *Nivea et Septem Nani* (Snow White and the Seven Dwarves), though some of them may be less well known to today's students, such as *Tres Hirci Asperi* (Three Billy Goats Gruff) or *Fistulator Versicolor Hamelinus* (The Pied Piper of Hamelin).

Each tale is written in dialogue form, including lines for a Narrator. As the authors note in the short introduction "How to Use This Book in Your Classroom" (vii), the translations have been designed this way in order to allow them to be performed aloud in the classroom by the students. The lines of dialogue are typically fairly short. The vocabulary is basic and straightforward for the most part, and macrons are marked. Each tale includes a vocabulary list at the beginning, and a short, fun activity at the end: a crossword puzzle, word search, or other word play activity designed to reinforce the vocabulary used in the story. Simple illustrations accompany each story. Most strikingly, each tale offers a short *Finis tortus*, or Twisted Ending, an alternate ending given in addition to a more standard ending for the story. These range from the amusing to the bizarre: for example, instead of being eaten by a fox, the *Homunculus Conditus* (Gingerbread Man) hoists himself to safety in a tree and laughs at the fox; in *Palliolatella* (Little Red Riding Hood), the wolf, instead of merely fleeing into the forest, is changed into an ugly frog with four eyes and six feet. These provide both another level of interest for the students and another opportunity to reinforce the vocabulary and grammar targeted in each story.

After the ten stories there are three sections in the back of the book. The first consists of Grammar Notes, two to three pages for each tale, explaining the concepts drilled in a particular way in that story. Some of these topics are fairly basic, such as Comparison of Adjectives, Purpose Clauses, and Deponent Verbs; others seem more advanced, such as the Double Dative, the Ablative of Respect, and the Potential Subjunctive. After the section on Grammar Notes there is a section of Grammar Exercises, again geared to each story. These exercises are designed to reinforce grammatical concepts found in the story (as opposed to the word games following each story, which reinforce vocabulary). The grammatical concepts highlighted in each story's Grammar Notes are not necessarily the same as the ones drilled in the Grammar Exercises for that particular story, perhaps reflecting the author's judgment as to which concepts can be explained more succinctly and which need to be drilled more thoroughly. The final section at the end of the book is a Latin-English Glossary to the words used in the tales.

At first glance this book reminded me of Milena Minkova and Terence Tunberg's *Mater Anserina: Poems in Latin for Children* (Focus, 2007), because both feature Latin adaptations of traditional literature aimed at children, and both are pitched to beginning readers. However the similarities pretty much end there. While the Latin versions of the poems in *Mater Anserina* are accompanied by short vocabulary lists glossing some of the words used, that book also includes the traditional English text alongside the Latin version, as well as an audio CD. Minkova and Tunberg's Latin translations employ the accentual verse used in late antique and medieval Latin poetry as well as rhyme, and seem designed to teach students how to hear and pronounce Latin as well as read it. *Ten Fairy Tales in Latin*, on the other hand, includes all of the grammar and vocabulary aids and activities described above and, though specifically designed for use in a classroom setting, it would also be useful for individual study for a motivated student. In addition, the Latin versions of the fairy tales are written so as to drill and reinforce specific grammatical concepts, some of which are fairly sophisticated. Moreover, the level of grammatical proficiency required for the tales seems to advance somewhat progressively as one moves through the book, though not drastically so.

Another book with a superficial resemblance to Twomey's is the similarly-titled *Fairy Tales in Latin (Fabulae Mirabiles)* by Victor Barocas (Hippocrene Books, 2000), which also features Latin versions of traditional fairy tales with illustrations and a glossary. However, Barocas' versions are longer and are clearly written for intermediate and advanced students who already have a solid grasp of grammar and some experience reading Latin prose; aside from the glossary, no additional

study aids or drills are provided. Barocas' book seems designed to offer alternative prose texts to read rather than to reinforce specific grammatical concepts.

The only real *caveat* to an instructor considering adopting *Ten Fairy Tales in Latin* is to consider whether one's students have reached the appropriate level of mastery; despite all the grammar notes and exercises, this book is aimed at students who have already mastered basic grammar. At the same time it seems pitched to younger students, if the classroom activities suggested by the authors—such as performing the tales as a puppet show (viii)—are any indication. However, with students at the advanced elementary and beginning intermediate level, this book could provide a welcome and engaging alternative, particularly with a motivated teacher.

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