

BOOK REVIEW

A Little Latin Reader. By MARY C. ENGLISH and GEORGIA L. IRBY. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xvii + 187. Paper, \$15.95. ISBN 978-0-19-984622-1.

English and Irby have collected excerpts from ancient texts and aligned them with typical modern grammatical assignments in this supplementary textbook. Designed for an enthusiastic high-school teacher or for a lower-level college grammar or survey course, the edition allows students to jump into un-adapted Latin from either inscriptional sources or from major Golden- and Silver-age authors. A majority of the text is devoted to excerpts organized by grammatical categories. The authors have nominally forged forty-six grammar topics, which cover a wide range: from simple case uses, tenses and clauses to more complex indirect statement, gerunds and conditionals. Each topic contains at least three (and as many as eight) excerpts ranging from Martial's two-line epigrammatic jabs to lengthier periods of Ciceronian speech. The passages are prefaced by contextual remarks or a brief summary and heavily annotated for students lacking background knowledge or an extensive vocabulary. (Glossed text also can be found in the book's glossary.) They also are formatted with macrons which may help with grammatical identification and Latin pronunciation for students and teachers who wish to read aloud.

For those students and teachers looking to supplement heavily adapted material of *Latin for Americans*, or the brief snippets of practice found in *Wheelock's Latin*, the range of sources used for the grammar topics is very useful. This range is exemplified by use of texts usually absent from most classrooms: Virgil's *Georgics*, Ovid's *Tristia*, and Cicero's *Pro Milone*. Nevertheless, the customary authors and works are present: Virgil's *Aeneid*, poems of *Catullus*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. As Caesar enters the AP Latin curriculum with the 2013 series of exams, the text offers a most-useful exposure to (syllabus) selections from Caesar's *de Bello Gallico*. Further, the AP teacher will be able to utilize the selections for sight reading practice, as often various authors are utilized for the same grammar topic.

The second half of the text is divided equally for intermediate and advanced readers. Selections from Livy, Petronius, and Pliny fulfill the call for prose practice

and Virgil and Ovid are tapped for poetry practice. Also included are selections from Sulpicia. The advanced prose selections borrow from Sallust, Tacitus, and Suetonius; the poetry from Horace, Germanicus and Statius.

In addition to a gradual increase in difficulty based on a typical grammar introduction to Latin, the text offers six excellent appendices. The authors have provided brief biographical sketches on Latin authors found in the text, a basic guide to Latin meter and scansion, a guide to Latin epigraphy (necessary for the numerous inscriptional excerpts), an index of Latin grammar, and a compilation of other supplemental Latin readers. Most impressive is the inclusion of an index to people and places as well as subjects utilized in the passages found in the text. Teachers will be able to quickly reference the brief, authentic sources to enhance classroom cultural experiences for students of any level. There is not present in the text any explanation of the grammar topics nor of the passages. The student or teacher should not use the text as a replacement for a textual commentary or grammar book.

With a plethora of ancient texts formatted by grammatical features, *A Little Latin Reader* provides an opportunity for students of all levels to supplement heavily-edited elementary texts for authentic Latin. The high-school teacher may use the text to aid in the transition from textbook Latin to authentic Latin. The college professor may provide additional practice through use of this reader. It is an excellent addition to any student or teacher library.

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