

BOOK REVIEW

Selections from Virgil Aeneid VIII: An Edition for Intermediate Students: lines 86-279, 558-84 with an introduction, commentary notes and vocabulary. By KEITH MACLENNAN. Bloomsbury Classical Languages. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. Pp. viii + 114. Paperback, \$12.95. ISBN: 978-1-5013-5034-4.

Selections from Virgil Aeneid X: An Edition for Intermediate Students: lines 215-50, 260-307, 362-98, 426-542 with introduction, commentary notes and vocabulary. By CHRISTOPHER TANFIELD. Bloomsbury Classical Languages. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. Pp. viii + 122. Paperback, \$12.95. ISBN: 978-1-5013-4986-7.

Selections from Virgil Aeneid XI: An Edition for Intermediate Students: lines 1-224, 498-521, 532-596, 648-689, 725-835 with introduction, commentary notes and vocabulary. By ASHLEY CARTER. Bloomsbury Classical Languages. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. Pp. viii + 142. Paperback, \$17.95. ISBN: 978-1-5013-4907-2.

Bloomsbury Classical Languages has produced a series of over a dozen books containing selections from ancient Latin authors mostly from the 1st centuries BCE and CE intended to be read by the intermediate Latin student, that is the student who has completed a standard course in Latin grammar. This review looks at the three texts that cover Virgil's *Aeneid* in Book VIII edited by Keith MacLennan, Book X edited by Christopher Tanfield and Book XI edited by Ashley Carter. Having taught Advanced Placement Latin for several years, I was excited to see selections coming from the second half of the *Aeneid*, since the Advanced Placement curriculum focuses solely on the first half.

The authors divide their books into four parts after a single page preface by the respective authors: Introduction, Text, Commentary Notes and Vocabulary. In each introduction, the authors provide a summary of Virgil's biography as well as the historical and literary context of the *Aeneid*. Carter went a step further by adding a section on the mythological background of the *Aeneid*. Each author

provides a summary of the whole *Aeneid* and a more in-depth and excellent review of their selected book. They all give some introductory information about Virgil's style, although MacLennan and Tanfield demonstrate what Virgil's style looks like in a selected passage, while Carter provides one online. Each author covers the rules of dactylic hexameter and includes a list of literary terms with definitions and examples from their selected book. All the authors include additional literary terms in their glossaries that are not present in the Latin text they selected, a potential confusion for students trying to use the Latin in each book to understand these terms. MacLennan spends time talking about aition and epyllion and how they relate to Hercules, Cacus and the Ara Maxima—valuable information for understanding Book VIII. While Carter looks further into the epic form of the *Aeneid*, MacLennan and Tanfield both explain what an epic simile is and how Virgil uses it in their selections. Carter is the only one who does not provide a map in the introduction. All the authors end their introduction with a short bibliography of further reading.

In the Latin text section of each book, the authors provide a short English introduction to the different selections. They select passages that focus on a central theme for their books, like Evander and Aeneas' relationship in Book VIII, the arête of Pallas in Book X or the battle with the Latins in Book XI. MacLennan and Tanfield select a similar number of lines (219 and 234 each), while Carter selects 311 from Book XI. One challenge present in the Latin text is the lack of macrons, valuable assistance for students just starting with Virgil.

After the Latin text, the authors provide extensive commentary where they point out challenging sentence word order, aid in translating or explain unique aspects of the grammar. Finally, a glossary of all the Latin words present closes out each book. However, if increasing the speed at which a student might read these selections was a priority, then I wish they placed the commentary and some vocabulary on the opposing page to the Latin text. I find it challenging for students to have to flip back and forth to the commentary and vocabulary section. It slows the reading and often makes the reader lose their place. I have observed students forgo the helpful commentary in order to focus on getting the vocabulary correct, often piecing the passage together as they think it should be and not how Virgil intended it. When the commentary is on the facing page, students are more likely to look at it.

Each book has an online portion. Books VIII and X have a series of online quizzes that cover the plot and stylistic identification. Book XI does not have exams yet. The quizzes feature the same questions no matter how many times you

REVIEW OF: Maclennan, Tanfield, and Carter, *Aeneid VIII, X, and XI: Selections 3*

complete it, unlike a Quia database where it can pull from many different questions. Each book has additional instructor resources, some behind a login screen, while others are open for any to use. I would not assign these as homework, but they are great for in class and offline review. Book X has an in-depth summary of the *Aeneid*, further commentary, a copy of the map, some extra activities, a couple of crosswords with their answer keys and grammatical analysis of a passage. Book XI has some ideas for essay topics, an example of stylistic analysis and a short timeline of Virgil's life. The online sources are great for projecting on a board to go over in front of class. Also, all the resources are found in a single place and there are documents there that I am already planning to add to my Advanced Placement curriculum.

Although I feel it would be a challenge to adopt these books for an entire semester since students might find it difficult with all the back and forth, I would use any of these books in my class as a break from the current curriculum or as sight passage practice.

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