which would aid literary analysis and perhaps suggest the involvement of the gods.

It is also worth noting that there are instances where grammar notes could provide greater support and it is useful as a teacher to step in (although I do not intend to suggest that this commentary should replace the teacher at A Level). For example, line 26 would benefit from a note on *sublatis* stating it is from *tollo* – some students assumed it is *sub + fero* and were baffled by being unable to find it in the glossary. Likewise, on line 92, it would be useful to have a note on *adnixa* saying it takes the dative, thereby explaining *ingenti … columnae*. Most significantly, the note on *ventum est* (line 803) simply states it is impersonal passive with no suggestion as to what could be implied as the agent. Students were left to wonder if they should choose 'we' (i.e. Jupiter and Venus) or 'they' (i.e. Aeneas and Turnus). *superus, -a, -um* is also not in the correct place in the alphabetical order of the glossary. For a teacher intending to have their class prepare the translation in their own time and discuss literary points in class, this might require more support than just this commentary depending on the ability and experience of their students.

In summary, this commentary provides an excellent contextual and literary introduction to Virgil's *Aeneid*. The grammar and literary notes are on the whole very strong and I would recommend this book to any A Level teacher, with the caveat that, for me personally, it was more suited to in-classroom work than self-study.

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Astronomia: Fabula Planetarum

Cunning (R.B.) Pp. 40, Independently published, 2022. Paper, £8.45, ISBN: 979-8-754-20186-6

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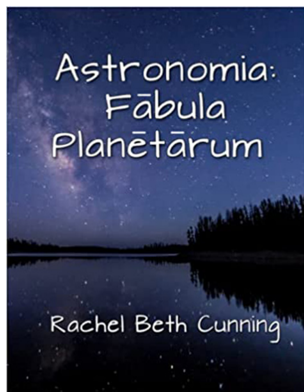

I can't begin a review of this title without commenting on the delight I felt when I first opened it, due to the content but also the experience. By that I mean the quality of the thick, black pages decorated with backdrops of starry skies and interspersed with images of great astronomers and far-away objects. As Rachel Beth Cunning says in her preface, this novella is for those who are enthusiasts both of Latin and the wider world up there, which given the classical attributions of most celestial objects, is quite a few of us!

With a working vocabulary of just 133 words required, this novella is easily accessible for most curious but not yet examination-level students. The grammar is centred around noun and verb endings in their most common forms, and whilst there are ablatives (which my *Cambridge Latin Course* students don't cover until their examination years), they are usually with prepositions which aid understanding rather than hinder it. The macrons are a helpful addition and can be used to encourage students who are interested in reading Latin aloud.

As a teacher in a girls' secondary school, I very much liked how the first double page centres on Maria Mitchell – an astronomer from the 19th century who made a name for herself discovering astronomical objects including comets. Through her we go on to learn about the features of the solar system, including some well-researched scientific concepts and plenty of mythological characters.

The text is large, the paragraphs are short and broken up by scientific and archaeological images, giving the reader plenty to do but without overwhelming them. In the mythological sections there is speech; useful both for practising first and second person endings as well as enticing us in to learn about how the planets and constellations came to be formed. Where Cunning has used modern vocabulary to define something not within the Roman vernacular, she has glossed the words, providing students with an easy way to understand some complex vocabulary as well as consider how and why the author has chosen the Latin word she has used for a particular concept.

I am not currently a great user of novellas with my students but I have some students in mind already who would greatly benefit from this sort of reading task and I am excited to incorporate these sorts of works into my classroom from now on.

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Virgil: The Aeneid.

Ferry (D.) (trans.) Pp. xxxiv + 427, ill, map. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2017, 2022. Paper, US$18 (Cased, US$35). ISBN: 978-0-226-81728-6.

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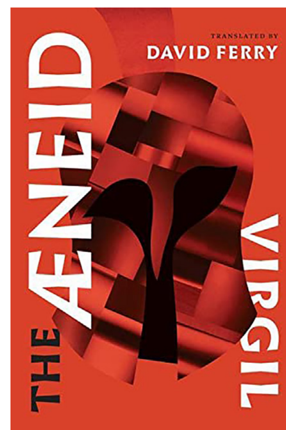

The *Aeneid* is Virgil's final unfinished poem, composed during the reign of the emperor Augustus. In the epic, the eponymous Trojan comes to Italy, where his descendants will found the Roman race. Notable scholars, from John Dryden to David West, challenged themselves to translate the original Latin dactylic hexameters into suitably epic English, and David Ferry is the latest to attempt this feat. Richard F Thomas provides a succinct introduction to the Homeric influence, Augustan context and possible interpretations of the poem.

Ferry chooses to use the metre of iambic pentameter, imitating Dryden, but without the former's heroic couplets. Consequently,

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Ferry's English firstly reads as more natural than Dryden's, and secondly has more scope to capture Virgil's variation between spondaic and dactylic lines. Indeed, he even relays the courses of the ships in the Book 5 boat race in this way.

In his introduction, Ferry vows to be 'reasonably close' to Virgil's Latin, explaining that he wants to prioritise the emotions over literal meaning. Significantly, he finishes this introduction by saying he perceives Virgil's 'pitying voice'.

This interpretation comes through in Ferry's arrangement of words and lines. For example, in the proem he leaves a space to isolate and emphasise 'Can anger like this, be in immortal hearts?' and 'So formidable the task of founding Rome'. As a result, the reader is encouraged to ponder the lines more effectively than in West's prose translation. Likewise, after Pallas mutilates the bodies of twins in Book 10, the emphatic positioning of 'glorious deeds, shame and remorse' captures Virgil's double-edged admiration and criticism of warrior ideals.

Occasionally one wonders at Ferry's choice of individual words or word order, especially when he uses less colloquial language. When Aeneas uses the archaic 'thy' in his despairing speech during the storm of Book 1, it sounds too formal for the raw terror in the setting. His long periodic sentences in Aeneas' flattering speech to Dido also seem too formal for the initial attraction which is suggested in the original Latin; likewise his use of the word 'will' for *iuvat* fails to fully convey the implied sarcasm in Aeneas' first response to Anchises in Book 2. From Turnus in Book 9, Ferry's wording of 'fortune gives aid to the audacious' cannot convey Turnus' tragic deluded confidence, which Virgil encapsulates in the brief Latin phrase *audentes fortuna iuvat*.

Moreover, some may say he goes too far in making his translation more idiomatic. For example, he translates Aeneas' shock at seeing Polydorus' ghost in Book 3 as 'There was a wonder! A terrifying portent!', which does not seem to convey the slow creeping sense of horror which is implied by Virgil in the two spondaic lines within the Latin.

Further to this point, Ferry omits whole Latin lines, such as the description of Janus' temple doors when Juno opens them in Book 7. Surely this description is important for our deep appreciation of what terrible events Juno is ushering in.

However, his use of technical terms such as 'oread' undoubtedly lends his translation a ring of authenticity. In a similar vein, it is notable that he keeps the famous Latin words *mirabile dictu* for Sinon's lying tale in Book 2. They do not not make the reading incomprehensible as they are close to the English and fit into his pentameter well.

Furthermore, he diligently conveys the ancient values implicit in Virgil. This aspect of his translation is apparent in Book 4, an example being where he repeats 'chastity' where Virgil has repeated *pudor*; by not varying his words, Ferry draws attention to Dido's gradual lapse of chastity, despite the character's protestations, more effectively than those translators who use 'chastity/honour/shame' interchangeably in this section.

However, personally, what stands out most is Ferry's effective use of repetition just as Virgil did, resulting in some exciting new possible interpretations. For example, in Book 2 he uses the words 'breasts high…licking', firstly for the snakes attacking Laocoön, secondly the Pyrrhus-snake simile, a move which mirrors Virgil's use in both instances of the words *pectore…linguis*; reading this new translation, I was struck by the thought that perhaps Virgil wanted to imply that warriors who enjoy war are as villainous as snakes which are happy seeing their prey, and so in this way Virgil seemingly completely undermines the Homeric heroic code.

For a similar reason, his characterisation of Juno is spectacularly vivid. Wherever Virgil used a Latin personal pronoun in her first speech, Ferry uses repetition in English which conveys the frightening force of her indignation in that speech. Conversely, in Venus' Book 1 speech to Cupid, where the repetition of *nate…nate* is at the start of following lines, he adds 'only' in his translation to bring out her hyperbolic manipulative emotion.

There are even notes of humour conveyed successfully by Ferry. For example, Charon accuses Aeneas of intending to 'kidnap our queen right out of her marital bedroom' and Cerberus 'wolfs down' the honey-cake offered by the Sibyl in Book 6. In Book 11 Tarchon harangues his men as 'you no-good, hang-back, half-ass Etruscans'. In these examples, Ferry's idiomatic choice of language, bathetic for such scenes, manages to remind us of Virgil's lighter touch, all to easy to miss in the epic.

The poem is a mandatory part of the OCR Classical Civilisation A Level, and students are expected to use secondary scholars in their essays for this. Thomas' introduction would provide useful points to debate in class as preparation for this aspect of the essays. Selections from the poem are on the syllabus for Latin A level, for which teachers could challenge higher-achieving students to evaluate the relative merits of Ferry's translation compared to his predecessors'. Finally, the glossary of place names makes the book useful as an extra reference point.

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Breakfast with Seneca: A Stoic Guide to the Art of Living

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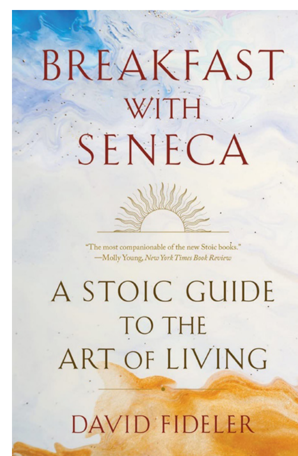

Ancient philosophy can be a particularly tricky topic for classroom teachers to deliver and for school students to embrace and understand. As a result it is imperative that any book that wishes to be included as a classroom resource be immensely accessible for teacher and learner alike. A further problem with the teaching of philosophy in a classroom is the relative inaccessibility of ancient authors to modern audiences and commentaries on these texts are too academic.

This book by Fideler however is the exact opposite. With Stoicism being a central philosophy of the Roman Empire and part of the wider context of the study of

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