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Bloomsbury Classical Languages

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Memorabilia (from Book 2, chapter 1, the “The Choice of Hercules,” on Hercules as an exemplar of virtue), with notes appended to the selections (133–145).

Scarborough’s notes, both on the lessons and on the selections from Xenophon, are explanatory but also peppered with questions for the student. For example, amid exercises on the first declension, he asks, “When is α retained throughout the singular?” (41, n. 1); and of ἡσθένει in *Anabasis* 1.1 he asks, “ἡσθένει has what kind of augment? where made? what does the imperfect denote?” (141). The effect of this conversational style is that the reader – now nearly 140 years after the book was penned – can have the experience of being taught by William Sanders Scarborough. In his *Autobiography* Scarborough wrote that he set out to write his own Greek textbook as part of his efforts to make “the ancient tongues living languages” for his students (*Autobiography*, p. 75). This is a goal shared by all teachers of Classical languages, and a particular delight of Scarborough’s lively, engaging text is that it gives readers the opportunity to transcend the difference in time and embark with him on that other time-traveling journey of learning Ancient Greek.

This text, then, would make for an excellent addition to an introductory or intermediate Greek course, at the high school or collegiate level. Instructors would need to use the text alongside a textbook that provides all forms, just as Scarborough imagined. The 75 lessons of exercises are perfect for those drilling and refining their Greek; and the selections from Xenophon, though brief, are well chosen and make for a fitting “target text” at the end of a sequence of study. Moreover, the inclusion of this text in an introductory or intermediate Greek curriculum could expand the course in productive ways, providing students with the opportunity to think about the history of the study of the Classics in the United States. With the help of Ronnick’s Introduction, students can be led to ask important questions such as: What broader conclusions can we draw from the remarkable story of Scarborough’s life and career? Who, over time, has been included and excluded from the study of the Classics? What societal consequences follow from that inclusion and exclusion? What in higher education has and has not changed from Scarborough’s time to our own?

Michele Ronnick, the volume’s editor Donald E. Sprague, and Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers are to be thanked for making available once again Scarborough’s *First Lessons in Greek*. This re-publication is an important event, and the text will prove to be helpful and healthy – in a great variety of ways – in Ancient Greek classrooms.

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Bloomsbury Classical Languages, the series under review here, includes the following books:

Alfred Artley, ed., *Selections from Ovid Amores II (An Edition for Intermediate Students)*. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. Pp. viii + 108. Paper (ISBN 978-1-5013-4981-2) \$12.95.

Ashley Carter, ed., *Selections from Virgil Aeneid XI (An Edition for Intermediate Students)*. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. Pp. viii + 142. Paper (ISBN 978-1-5013-4907-2) \$17.95.

John Godwin, ed., *Selections from Ovid Heroides (An Edition for Intermediate Students)*. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. Pp. xi + 108. Paper (ISBN 978-1-5013-5010-8) \$12.95.

John Godwin, ed., *Selections from Horace Odes III (An Edition for Intermediate Students)*. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. Pp. viii + 104. Paper (ISBN 978-1-5013-5018-4) \$12.95.

John Godwin, ed., *Selections from Horace Satires (An Edition for Intermediate Students)*. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. Pp. viii + 109. Paper (ISBN 978-1-5013-4990-4) \$12.95.

Benedict Gravell, ed., and Ellen O' Gorman, intro., *Selections from Tacitus Histories I (An Edition for Intermediate Students)*. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. Pp. viii + 184. Paper (ISBN 978-1-5013-4998-0) \$17.95.

Keith Maclennan, ed., *Selections from Virgil Aeneid VIII (An Edition for Intermediate Students)*. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. Pp. viii + 113. Paper (ISBN 978-1-5013-5034-4) \$12.95.

Anita Nikkanen, ed., *Selections from Propertius, Tibullus and Ovid (An Edition for Intermediate Students)*. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. Pp. viii + 171. Paper (ISBN 978-1-5013-5046-7) \$17.95.

Katharine Radice, ed., and Roland Mayer, intro., *Selections from Tacitus Annals I (An Edition for Intermediate Students)*. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. Pp. viii + 174. Paper (ISBN 978-1-5013-5002-3) \$17.95.

Christopher Tanfield, ed., *Selections from Cicero Philippic II (An Edition for Intermediate Students)*. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. Pp. viii + 179. Paper (ISBN 978-1-5013-5030-6) \$17.95.

Christopher Tanfield, ed., *Selections from Virgil Aeneid X (An Edition for Intermediate Students)*. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. Pp. viii + 121. Paper (ISBN 978-1-5013-4986-7) \$12.95.

Stuart R. Thomson, ed., *Selections from Apuleius Metamorphoses V (An Edition for Intermediate Students)*. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. Pp. viii + 120. Paper (ISBN 978-1-5013-5042-9) \$12.95.

Roberta West, ed., and Lynn Fotheringham, intro., *Selections from Cicero Pro Milone (An Edition for Intermediate Students)*. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. Pp. viii + 161. Paper (ISBN 978-1-5013-4994-2) \$17.95.

Bloomsbury Academic has distinguished itself in recent years as a first rate press for the publication of student-friendly texts and commentaries on a wide range of Latin (especially) and Greek authors and works. An impressive array of new commentaries continues to appear at a rapid rate of speed. One subset of the Bloomsbury bibliography is the new set of intermediate level texts and commentaries aimed at the college and advanced secondary school market. This series is entitled “Bloomsbury Classical Languages,” and is accompanied by a free website of supplemental materials.

Bloomsbury commentaries come in two general categories: integral works (for example, a book of Tacitus’ *Annals* or of Virgil’s *Aeneid*), and works that reflect the current realities of British academic syllabuses (“OCR” and so forth), with coverage of specific lines or passages from a given work. Occasionally there are two volumes in print, one with only the syllabus selections, the other with the complete work. Many of the editions in the series were authored by active teachers in the British secondary school system (often with introductions by university professors). No edition presumes the use of any particular elementary text. Students ordering these commentaries online may need to be reassured that there is little difference in whether or not they purchase the “OCR” endorsed, British editions of the volumes of the series; the content is the same. Bloomsbury has in fact done well in responding to the particular needs of examination syllabuses in the United Kingdom alongside more global curricular desires. That said, those users who do not wish to be constrained by the “OCR”-required selection of particular passages from a work will want to purchase the integral text from the Bloomsbury catalogue where available.

If one adjective comes to mind first in reviewing Bloomsbury's "intermediate" series of editions, it is "realistic." The second descriptor would be "practical." These are truly editions that accomplish what they purport to offer, namely to provide all the assistance a neophyte reader will require in approaching a continuous text for the first time. The notes are elementary (but not condescending); the vocabulary and glossary aids are extensive; the commentary references to secondary scholarship are kept to a bare minimum. The result is on the one hand a set of volumes that is modest in terms of size and scholarly ambition; on the other hand, students who progress through the available titles will hone their skills in reading Latin prose and poetry with pleasure and, one may hope, appreciable success. It is difficult to imagine that any student user of these Bloomsbury intermediate editions will be overwhelmed by the content (if anything, some students may well be motivated to seek out more expansive commentaries, which in itself is a measure of the success of so-called schoolboy editions). Ambitious students at the end of a year of college Latin could easily take up one of these texts; intermediate classes should have no trouble in utilizing them. It is highly unlikely that an intermediate student would feel daunted by the volumes in this series. Robert West's edition of selections from Cicero's *Pro Milone* offers a good example of what might even call the friendliness of this collection. Challenging Ciceronian periods are explicated with clarity and gentle rigor.

In addition to the volumes of the series, there are also the aforementioned (more or less extensive) online ancillary aids that are also available to accompany the printed commentaries. The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* is regularly cited in the various volumes; so also such works as Bennett's *New Latin Grammar* (a perhaps surprising choice). Poetry students interested in metrical analysis will be satisfied with the very generous help afforded with scansion; those drawn to textual criticism will be less satisfied, though one imagines that there are few Leos left to chasten classical neophytes who dare to read texts devoid of apparatuses (still, if there were any area of improvement I would suggest in the series, it would be to devote more attention to giving students an introduction to critical editions and textual variants). Some material here and there is borrowed from the school editions that were most recently published by the Bristol Classical Press, whose catalogue Bloomsbury now manages. References and citations heavily prejudice Anglophone scholarship, which is to be expected given the anticipated audience of the volumes. I have my doubts that student users of any commentary that includes a glossary will ever be particularly motivated to hunt for more lexical information in standard dictionaries, but the battle to keep vocabularies out of student editions is one battle the present reviewer abandoned many moons ago, and there is an undeniable advantage to having a word list in the back of every book (especially in an age of ever weaker elementary language preparation). Users of these commentaries who lack basic familiarity with grammatical terms and concepts will need supplemental help on occasion, but even here the authors are regularly compassionate in the degree of assistance they provide.

One consistently praiseworthy feature of this set of commentaries is to be found in the volume introductions. Roland Mayer's contribution to Katharine Radice's edition of Tacitus' *Annals* 1 is of particularly high quality, and could well be assigned in a wide range of classes on Tacitus and imperial Roman historiography. Tacitus has not been generously well served by student-friendly editions; Gravell and O'Gorman's volume of selections from Book 1 of the *Historiae* is especially welcome. Keith Maclennan's work on Virgil is of a similarly laudable high standard of quality, and he has distinguished himself in student commentaries on selections from the *Aeneid* as the "Gould and Whiteley" of the present day. John Godwin has a long and admirable record of student editions for such series as the Aris & Phillips Classical Texts; his contributions to Bloomsbury on Horace's *Odes* and *Satires* constitute other highlights of the collection; the author's introductory essays on both Horace's patron Maecenas and on the genre of satire are particularly noteworthy.

A special word of praise may be given to Anita Nikkanen for her work in producing one of the most intrinsically useful volumes of the series: an exemplary student edition of selected elegies of Propertius, Tibullus and Ovid. The sensitive readings of these poets on display in the introduction and in the commentary notes, coupled with the author's impeccable grasp of the philological and metrical puzzles posed by these challenging poets, combine to create a truly marvelous student edition. Anyone offering an undergraduate class on Roman elegy will want to consider adopting this volume.

This Bloomsbury intermediate series has few rivals on the market. Bolchazy & Carducci offer an admirable series of readers devoted to various classical authors, with a generous range of selections in one convenient volume per writer. Bloomsbury commentaries provide more commentary than the Bryn Mawr series of student guides; they also have the aforementioned glossaries. The British editions published by Open Book Publishers regularly offer far more treatment of secondary scholarship (perhaps to a degree that would overwhelm many first-time readers of Latin literature, though with admirable results for those motivated to explore literary criticism in more depth). Bloomsbury's catalogue will be of interest to those who want relatively inexpensive, convenient editions of particular works that provide reliable help in explicating the original text. Both the press and the various authors and editors are to be congratulated for the quality work on display here that offers significant help in the sometimes difficult transition from first to second year college Latin. There are many options on the market for teachers of intermediate Latin. The Bloomsbury catalogue deserves to be the first choice for consistently helpful commentaries.

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