

W. FITZGERALD, *HOW TO READ A LATIN POEM*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. x + 278. ISBN 9780199657865. £20.00.

This book falls between several pairs of stools. Not on the spine but inside is a clause in supplement of the title: 'if you can't read Latin yet'. That begs a question immediately. This reviewer has been learning and reading Latin for six and a half decades, and teaching it for five and a half (and seldom to absolute beginners): should a reviewer not be someone without any Latin? Who else can say whether that exhortatory supplement works?

After the Prelude in which Fitzgerald looks at Martial 1.1 and Catullus 1, he starts on the elegiac couplet and love poetry by analysing Sulpicia 1 (= Tibullus 3.13) with close attention paid to the language. Sulpicia 1 is not the straightest way into Latin love poetry, but F. makes the poem interesting for its content and shows in quite some detail how language, syntax and word order reveal its particular sense. Little explanation is offered, however, of the language that describes the language, and few of the poems studied later have anything like the detail offered here. Does F. hope that his readers get going on the language themselves as they read? Sulpicia 1 is a poem of only ten lines; the longest whole poem that F. considers is Horace *Odes* 1.5, of sixteen lines. In the chapter on Vergil and the one on Lucretius and Ovid, *Metamorphoses* F. is really discussing poetry rather than poems, and that is inevitable unless the book is to be thousands of pages long.

What F. says about rhythm, metre and pronunciation I pass over in dismayed silence. Good use is made in the Introduction of Kipling's pastiche 'Horace *Odes* 5.3' to point up differences between Latin and English (see the chapter called 'Regulus' in 'The Complete Stalky and Co.' for Kipling's rather gilded reminiscence of Horace as taught to him), but F.'s omission of anything on Plautus or Terence leaves classical Latin practice in a void, and the misprint of au as ou on p. 30 is unfortunate.

Latinless readers will not get Latin from this; what impression they will get of how Roman poets made the language work I can only guess. They may nevertheless get interested in Latin poetry because F. writes fluently, personally and engagingly about it, and they may get enough from that to plunge into Latin properly (a word on the availability of courses and summer schools would help). I hope they do, as F. does (1), but I think the book that F. professes to write is impossible.

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S. GURD, *WORK IN PROGRESS. LITERARY REVISION AS SOCIAL PERFORMANCE IN ANCIENT ROME* (APA American Classical Studies 57). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. 167. ISBN 9780199837519. £52.00.

S. MCGILL, *PLAGIARISM IN LATIN LITERATURE*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. ix + 241. ISBN 9181107019379. £62.00.

Where did Romans think their books came from? Each of these volumes, in its own, builds on the recent interest in understanding the written word as a social phenomenon of Roman culture to explore Roman rhetorics of literary process. McGill advertises at the outset his disinterest in tracing a phenomenon over time, establishing his subject as a timeless one. An opening methodological chapter confronts two major challenges: first, the inherent risks of seeking an anachronistic subject, and second, the fact that any and all evidence for ancient literary plagiarism as a practice or as an idea is necessarily evidence of its *representation*. The book is accordingly divided into accusations of (prefaces, Martial) and defences against (Terence, Seneca, Vergil) plagiarism. In the absence of 'verifiable cases' (4), this is not a book about Roman plagiarism but about Roman claims of plagiarism. M. demonstrates clearly the use of *furtum* in literary contexts to connote plagiarism. While commendably sensitive to the range of registers in which one might jokingly accuse another of theft, this raises a question: why is it that Latin did not have a word that, like English 'plagiarism', connotes authorial theft *exclusively* and without recourse to activating a special sense of a more common word? Perhaps this alerts us to a problem with identifying plagiarism as an ancient idea unto itself under the rubric of *furtum*.

A chief contention is that talking about plagiarism is useful to promote one's own writing. This emerges most clearly from his survey of plagiarism's place in Latin prefaces: Vitruvius, Pliny the