

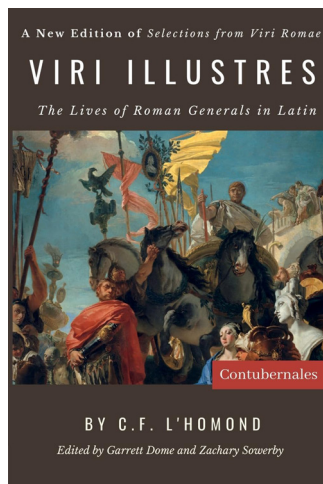
## Book Review

### C.F. L'Homond: *Viri Illustres. The Lives of Roman Generals in Latin*

Dome (G.), Sowerby (Z.), Arrowsmith (R.), Knapp (C.) (edd.) Pp. vi + 102, ills. Washington: Contubernales Publishing, 2023. Paper, US\$19.99. ISBN: 979-8-9876456-2-8.

Brian J. Zawiski

Don Bosco Prep School, Ramsey, NJ, USA  
[bzawiski@donboscoprep.org](mailto:bzawiski@donboscoprep.org)



This new edition of the work originally published by Charles François L'Hommond, a professor at the University of Paris in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and later edited and republished at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Robert Arrowsmith and Charles Knapp, provides us with an invaluable resource for the beginning Latin student. Unfortunately, beginning Latin courses have far too often been reduced to mere memorisation of the minutiae of Latin grammar and in the process of studying one paradigm of

endings after another, so many students have been turned off to the beauty of Latin and the culture that its literature opens up to us. As the editors of this edition, Garrett Dome and Zachary Sowerby, in their preface clarify, 'This edition is intended as a reader for content-based instruction which follows the natural approach.'

The text is comprised of 30 chapters. Each chapter focuses on a prominent figure from the founding of the city up to and including Augustus. The first eight chapters cover the founding and the monarchy. Chapters nine through 21 focus on key figures of the Republic; while, chapters 22 through 30 focus on figures of the Late Republic and beginning of the Empire. Each chapter ranges in length from one paragraph to eight pages. The text is accessible to a novice Latin student. There are no grammar or vocabulary notes provided to assist with comprehension. A teacher would have to aid the students with these. However, there does seem to be a benefit in excluding these notes, as it hopefully promotes direct engagement with the text. This text, adapted from classical authors, allows for a smooth transition for the beginning student to go from reading adapted texts to authentic literature. In their preface, the editors of this recent edition claim that 'students will be able to read Eutropius and Livy with minimal assistance' after using this text. The beginning student is given not only an opportunity to engage with the language, but also an encounter with Roman culture and worldview.

In their 1895 preface, Robert Arrowsmith and Charles Knapp highlight how a text of this sort gives a 'foretaste of the contents of the literature' to the beginning student and allows them to engage with the values and culture of the ancient Roman world in a way that reducing the study of Latin to the study of charts and grammar minutiae would likely stifle. Through encountering the lives of these great figures, the beginning Latin student is able to encounter the virtues and characteristics that the ancient Romans valued.

doi: 10.1017/S2058631024000825