

example, the musical duel between the frogs and Dionysus is done to the rhythm and rhyme of *Highway to Hell* by AC/DC with the frogs throughout singing 'he's on a causeway to hell!' I found this to be a refreshing modern take which I agree with the translator is fully in the spirit of Aristophanes. I must admit that, being in my mid-30s, a few of the artists used were before my time and required a quick music search for reference; however, I did find that this approach helped to breathe greater life into the text and went a little way to capturing what it might have been like for the ancient audience. Again, with my teaching hat on I have used this as a way of helping my own students capture the mood of the play and asked them to devise their own songs as a way of understanding the play.

While there is a requirement for students to use the prescribed set text translations, I certainly feel that there are elements of this edition that would make it a worthwhile purchase for a department. Additionally, for those not teaching the play who would like to start their exploration into Greek comedy, or for those more seasoned readers looking for an interesting take on the work of Aristophanes, this is a worthwhile read.

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Roman Britain Puzzles

Morgan (J.). Pp. x+89, ills. Independently published, 2021. Paper, £5.99. ISBN: 9798613354061

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Have you been studying Roman Britain with your classes? Are you looking for something for the end of term? Or for extension? Then this is the book for you! Julian Morgan's book of *Roman Britain Puzzles* has something for everyone, from word searches (quite hard in some cases) to various forms of sudoku, code breaking, anagrams, quizzes on Roman roads in Britain (some research required here maybe), crosswords and more. The variety is astonishing and there is something for all levels of knowledge, ability and even interest; and don't worry –

the answers are in the back, but don't tell the students! This book might look slim, but it is packed with information and should interest even the most reluctant student as it deals not only with the Romans but with what you can see around you in Britain today. There are some quizzes on inscriptions that might require a bit of help for those without Latin, but there is an epigraphy appendix provided at the back of the book as well. Epigraphy got me interested in studying Latin many, many years ago and – who knows? – it might just grab some of our modern students. A few of the crosswords are quite hard; good for half-term homework perhaps or for extending keen

students, but overall, what comes across is the deep interest and knowledge shown by the author of this book and at £5.99 it is well worth the money for any school.

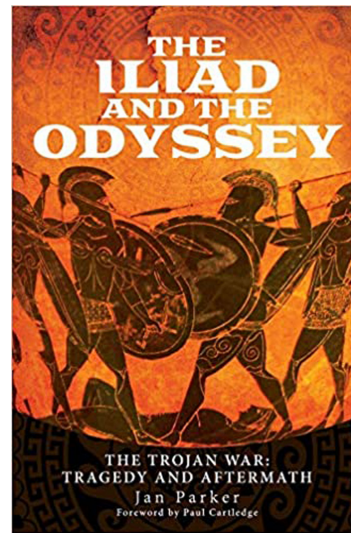
doi: 10.1017/S2058631022000502

The Iliad and the Odyssey: The Trojan War: Tragedy and Aftermath

Parker (J.) pp. 272. Pen and Sword Military, 2021. £25.00. ISBN: 978-1526779939

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Homer's surviving epics about the Trojan War and its aftermath, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, are canonical works in European literature. Jan Parker's new book gives a comprehensive overview of the plots with discussion of the heroic values within them, illustrated with relevant and illuminating pictures of the Trojan War taken from pottery. She uses her own translations throughout the book to support her range of points.

In her introduction to the *Iliad*, she summarises the archaeological evidence for the history behind the

Trojan war myth, before launching her overall argument that the poet both celebrates and problematises the value of *kleos* (glorious reputation). Emphasising the performative context of individual rhapsodes adding their own interpretations, she uses the repeated authorial interjections of 'fool' to argue that the characters' inability to understand *moira* (fate) renders them tragic victims of it, most notably Hector.

For each book of the *Iliad*, Parker provides a summary with her overall interpretation, which is frequently compelling. Her interpretation of book 5 as 'cinematic' in Diomedes' *aristeia* (spectacular killing spree) supports her view of the poem as ambivalent about war, balanced as it is by her summary of book 6 and her interpretation of it as civilian-focused. Developing this argument, she highlights similes in book 11, such as the comparison of Ajax to a donkey, as exemplars of Homer's dual perspective on peace and war. Most notably, the author lays bare the extent of Achilles' guilt for the irresponsibility of Patroklos' death, surely reminiscent of Aeneas' feelings at Pallas' death in Virgil's *Aeneid*, but leaves it to the reader to make this comparison. Parker herself does make comparisons but leaves room for readers to reach their

own conclusions about the significance of these comparisons, such as the shields of Achilles and Aeneas, with the result that the book could stimulate intertextual debate but does not 'spoon-feed' students. Her final chapter rings this nascent comparison by suggesting that Virgil picked up Homeric characters to raise a new question, as to whether imperialism is worth the human cost.

Her interpretations could provide useful points for discussion in the first lesson on any given book from the *Iliad*; for example, she views the divine quarrel in book 1 as a less serious parallel to argument among the Greek leaders. Here she could be more precise in her point that Hephaestus is 'clowning' but overall, her interpretation of this particular book is convincing. Furthermore, her presentation of Helen as a sympathetic figure in the 'telescopy' scene could stimulate profound discussion about the character (although one might suggest that she could refer to contrary opinions such as that of Bettany Hughes). Her comparison of Agamemnon in book 9 to 'a modern politician' could prompt a debate about which modern politicians exactly and why. Furthermore, she uses contextual theories and evidence effectively. Firstly, her discussion of Hesiod and the Athenian council gives an enlightening view of the divine arguments in Book 15 and their possible political interpretation by Ancient Greeks. Secondly, she brings up Greek drama to propose that Patroclus is tragic hero in the Aristotelian sense. For myself, I am not convinced that Patroclus has a *hamartia* (tragic flaw) in the full sense of the concept, but her proposition is thought-provoking nonetheless. On the other hand, one might suggest that she could be more critical about Jonathon Shay's book on instances of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) in Vietnam and Achilles' psychology; for example, it's not clear that Agamemnon's rupture of bonds of *aidos* (respect) between *philoï* (allies) mirrors the modern generals' apparent betrayal of their men.

Moving to the second half of Parker's book, she introduces the *Odyssey* with a summary and projects her own interpretation: the hero loses his identity as a commander over the course of his journey and narrative, catharsising his traumas. Parker takes Shay's research again to propose that Odysseus' story-telling and initial distrust of his household are similar to the actions of PTSD sufferers. For example, she interprets Odysseus' tears on hearing the bard sing about Troy in book 8 as a purge of his memories to reform his identity; although this is an engaging argument, it would be more convincing if she provided more direct comparisons and contrasted other scholars' such as Charles Segal (on 'Kleos and its Ironies', 1983). Moreover, one could argue that she takes this too far when discussing Odysseus' return to Ithaca, since she explains his disguise as a form of new identity without reference to his need to avoid death at the suitors' hands. She is also a little unconvincing when she extends her argument that identity is a dominant theme in the second half of the epic to Penelope, perhaps underestimating the significance of sleep as a form of comfort to the character as well as an opportunity for self-renewal.

The only deeply unconvincing section is her summary and analysis of *Odyssey* book 19. Here, she potentially confuses the reader by alternating between discussion of the boar hunt scar and Penelope's dream. Furthermore, she even errs when she says Penelope compares herself to a mother who killed her daughter, when in fact this mother killed her son. This distinction is important because the simile thus implies that Penelope is betraying her son by not sending away the suitors, an implication that Parker does not discuss.

I would say that the most convincing and original part of her argument concerns books 16–18. She links Eumaeus' greeting of Telemachus 'like a father' to Argos' deterioration to Penelope's lament

for her looks which have been wasted by years of longing for her husband. Parker identifies, in each case, the ravages of time and shock to the hero's memory. Consequently, this section would encourage any A level student to think more deeply beyond the superficial purpose of survival behind Odysseus' disguise in these books.

To any A level student studying the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in Classical Civilisation, the book provides a clear introduction and the 'key word' sections are especially illuminating about the heroic code, with appropriate examples to highlight their meaning and profound discussion of where each belongs in the 'epic layers.' The summaries could be set as preparatory reading in homework before studying each book in class, much more effective than internet summaries available.

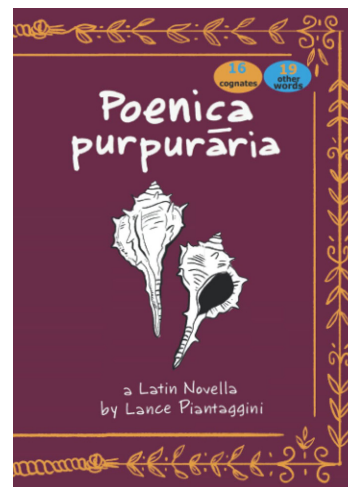
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Poenica purpuraria. A Latin Novella

Piantaggini (L.) Pp. 76, Poetulus Publishing (Independent), 2020. Paper, US\$7. ISBN: 9798686005020

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When was the last time you read a new Latin text without a dictionary to hand? There are many new Latin texts published over the past five years which have not been reviewed in this journal. These are in the new genre of Latin 'novellas' which are aimed at those who are in the earlier stages of Latin. Over 100 have been self-published, and more are coming out every month. They are little known in the UK – as far as I can see only two have been reviewed in *JCT*. They are a manifestation of the

transformation of Latin teaching in some schools in the USA. The driving force behind them is the theory of Comprehensible Input – the belief that a person's acquisition of a language is improved by reading (or hearing) large quantities of text for comprehension at a level that is not much beyond their current level. For a fuller survey, see Hunt (2022)¹.

Piantaggini is a leading exponent of this approach, and he has himself written and self-published 19 novellas so far. He has extensive experience of teaching first year Latin in a USA High School (equivalent to UK Year 10) to the full ability range and he

¹Hunt, S. (2022). *Novellas and Free Voluntary Reading: an overview and some starting points for further research into practice*, *Journal of Classics Teaching*, 27 May 2022, pp. 1-8.