

quicker than getting everyone to turn to the relevant page in their grammar books. This ability to keep checking on the details of how Latin works could be used to improve students' confidence in the technicalities of the language so they become a natural part of their approach to reading Latin.

The comments on content include literary terms (which are defined in an appendix), and extend to the bigger themes as well as the immediate context. They are generally clear, informative and engaging. They help build up a student's appreciation for the skill of the author, particularly for the verse selections. They can also be quite fun: I particularly enjoyed the note on *Amores* 1.1 line 1 where it comments that 'Ovid lets us sneak behind the curtain, to see him waging a different kind of war with the gods...', or the comment on Livy's use of *immo* as 'sarcastic, the equivalent of 'Yeah, right' '.

There is a brief introduction to each theme (between one and two sides) and to the individual authors. There is also a list of 'Commentaries for further reading'. Both left me feeling a little short-changed and wanting more information. I would have liked a longer discussion of themes and works, and a suggestion for further secondary reading for pupils rather than a list of other, more advanced, commentaries. The explanation of metre is similar: it sets out clearly the various metrical schemes met in the book, but assumes that the basics of scansion are already known, which is unlikely to be the case. There again, most people will have their own, well-honed method of teaching this.

For those taking the IB, this book should be seriously considered. Others may also want to consider it as a reader for first year of the A level course. It gives a good variety of authors and, at 360 pages, a lot of text for the money. It could be used to prepare the way for an author of one of the set texts at A level or to give experience of a different genre. It could be a good way to help consolidate the grammar and syntax of the language and to build up students' literary awareness prior to tackling examined authors. It could also be used as a reader to consolidate language for first year university students or for teachers wishing to focus on getting more fluency and confidence in their own Latin reading.

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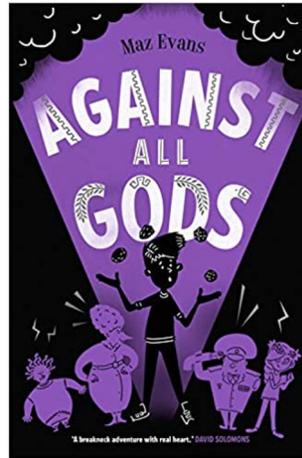
Against All Gods

Evans (M). Pp. 314. Frome: Chicken House Books, 2019. Paper, £6.99. ISBN: 978-1-911077-00-8.

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The fourth and final book of the *Who Let the Gods Out?* series, *Against All Gods* is an enjoyable and humorous introduction to the world of the Olympian gods. Following the story of 13-year-old Elliot Hooper, the book opens in the Underworld as Elliot attempts to retrieve the fourth and final Chaos Stone. Once brought together, the Chaos Stones give the user a variety of powers which of course Elliot must prevent from getting into the wrong hands, notably Thanatos and Hypnos who want to end the world as we know it. Unfortunately, they have promised Elliot the return of his deceased mother, and so we watch him wrestle with his desire for a reunited family versus saving the world.



Although the last in the series, *Against All Gods* is easy enough to read as a standalone – there is enough exposition to allow the reader to catch up and enjoy the story. Written in large font and with illustrations at the start of each chapter, the book would be an easy and enjoyable read for most secondary school-aged children, though I suspect it would most be enjoyed by those under 11. I particularly enjoyed the drawings of Achilles as a general at the bottom of each page – when flicked through, he gets up to all sorts of activities and regu-

larly falls apart as does his character within the narrative.

The characterisation of the gods is a quick way to allow children a greater understanding of the Olympian gods' roles and background stories – Demeter is forever trying to feed everyone and Zeus and Hera have recently had a nasty divorce on account of Zeus' relationships with a few Miss World contestants. There were times when this characterisation did not always seem obvious – Hermes as a stereotypical 'gym bro' with an obsession with dieting, working out, and using youthful slang would not have been my first choice, but nevertheless there are links and perhaps these were explained in the preceding books. As an adult, I did find Hermes' colloquialisms somewhat grating, but I can see that younger readers would see the humour.

The story also allows the reader to gain an understanding of key myths – Elliot's mortal nemesis, Patricia Porschley-Plum eventually gets her just desserts in the Underworld, where she sees evildoers such as Sisyphus carrying out their punishments. Although these prisoners are not named, they could help form a background knowledge for later study of Classics.

The book ends with a 'What's What' of characters, places, and objects mentioned in the story, allowing the reader to learn a little more about the classical world and fill in gaps if the previous books have not been read.

Overall, *Against All Gods* is an enjoyable read that allows children to gain a general understanding of and interest in the classical world through a humorous and fast-paced story.

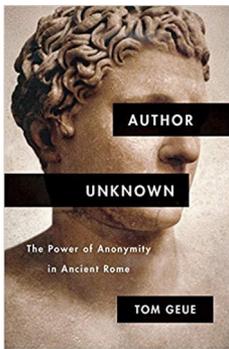
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Author Unknown: The Power of Anonymity in Ancient Rome

Geue, (T). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019. Pp. 320 Hardback ISBN 978-0-67498-820-0 £33.25

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This book seeks to explore the power of names – and moreover, the power of no names – in Classical literature. The texts considered



are mostly lesser-known works of Imperial literature, including plays, inscriptions, fables and verse. The concept is an interesting and original one: Geue argues that anonymity can in fact be a valuable feature or device which adds to the significance of the work, rather than detracting from it or rendering the text unimportant. Through a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the chosen texts (*Res Gestae*, Ovid's *Ibis*, the *Octavia*, Phaedrus' *Fables*, *Laus Pisonis*, Calpurnius Siculus' *Eclogues* amongst others),

Geue argues that the authors' decisions to name, or not to name, are deliberate, purposeful and add meaning. Both the internal and external anonymity of texts are considered throughout.

The original premise may seem obscure at first: why, in a book on anonymity, are texts with named authors discussed, for example? However, this book is about more than anonymity in its simplest sense. It is about the decisions around nomenclature and naming conventions in texts, the use of names to confer power, and the intentional erasure or avoidance of names to remove it. The book also questions the relationship between context and text. Geue proposes that texts in fact have more value when nameless as they can be appreciated without preconceptions or assumptions about the author.

The line of argument is at times difficult to follow, and, indeed, the language used in the book makes the discussion hard work for the reader in places: it would be advisable to have an English dictionary to hand. If you didn't know what *antonomasia* meant beforehand, you will do after reading this book. The author swings between a highly academic, scholarly vocabulary and a casual, informal and chatty tone: phrases such as 'so damn mentionable', 'whack-job' and 'monster-germs' sit alongside the technical vocabulary and it is not entirely clear who the intended audience is for this book. It would most likely be too technical, and the language too daunting and inaccessible for general use in schools.

The extensive use of original sources is commendable as Geue includes many passages from the texts in the Latin or the Greek, with translations and detailed analyses. The translations are well phrased and fluent. Whilst Geue starts off including passages with translations immediately afterwards, increasingly he moves on to using Latin and Greek terms and phrases without explanation. Not all of the Greek and Latin vocabulary items used in the book's discussions are translated. Certainly, any reader would need a working knowledge of both ancient languages to access the arguments fully.

One of the first major discussions in the book is a chapter on the *Res Gestae*, which is a peculiar choice in a book on anonymity, but Geue makes a convincing argument for how Augustus used anonymity to further his own interests; for example, by saying that Augustus did not name what he had done in rebuilding the Capitolium or the Theatre of Pompey without inscribing his name. Of course, the author of these works would have been common knowledge and the *Res Gestae* helps to erase this façade of anonymity completely. The deliberate omission of Antony's name – and furthermore, the reduction of Antony's name to a relative clause – Geue argues, is clearly deliberate and demonstrates that Augustus uses anonymity to further his own interests – *his* is the only name worth remembering. In other words, the power of anonymity is that which Augustus forces onto others. The political dimension to this discussion was very interesting and could be useful material for stretch and challenge at A Level or IB.

Another discussion worthy of particular mention is on the 'breathtaking nominal gymnastics' (p.100) of the *Octavia*. Geue observed that, as a general rule, this play appears to avoid names and therefore is able to use names in quick succession to great effect in order to shock the audience. The extent to which any original audience would have been fully aware of any intentional 'nominal gymnastics' is however unclear.

Whilst the first section of the book explored political texts and their internal and external anonymity, the second part explores three relatively obscure texts which are largely anonymous: Phaedrus' *Fables*; *Laus Pisonis* and Calpurnius Siculus' *Eclogues*. There is a valuable and thought-provoking discussion on the connection between the historical author and the persona of the author. The inclusion of texts which are little-known was refreshing and Geue's aims admirable in departing from the usual suspects: but most of the texts chosen are perhaps just too obscure to be of much immediate value in the classroom.

The third and final section of the book, titled 'Whence and When' explores prose texts such as the *Apocolocyntosis* and *Satyrica*. This was the most challenging argument to follow. The basic line of discussion is perhaps worthwhile, but could be expressed much more succinctly.

This book is complex, scholarly yet informal in tone, and the basic argument is an important one. Names in texts – and the lack of names in texts – are important. There is power in a name. The author's choices are deliberate. Anonymous texts – and there are many – are free of assumptions and preconceptions and can be appreciated at face value. Geue has a very wide interpretation of anonymity in this book. The extent to which anonymity is important is worth considering and it is enlightening to consider anonymity as a feature which can add to the significance of a text. The argument that the anonymous should be central to the study of antiquity is an innovative idea but it is unlikely to gain traction against the literary giants which dominate the Classical courses at school and university. As a text for use in schools, its use is arguably rather limited by the language of the book and the scope of the texts considered. For inquisitive sixth formers, the section on the *Res Gestae* may prove an interesting digression: but I would recommend not being too far away from a dictionary!

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Seamus Heaney & the Classics

Harrison (S), Mackintosh (F), Eastman (H) edd.
pp. xii + 290. OUP, 2019. Hardback, £70 ISBN
978-0198805656

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Retired Teacher

At last, a single volume on a major element in Heaney's (SH) work. The editors have been both judicious and wide-ranging in their choice of essays. Two of them have their own pieces in the volume. The decision to include pieces by a producer/director of SH's re-imaginings of Sophoclean drama is both wise and illuminating; one has to reread both to comprehend the sheer otherness of SH's