

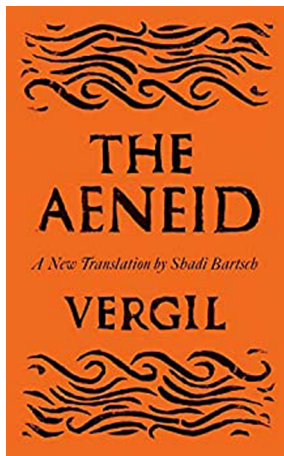
## Book Review

### *Vergil: The Aeneid. A New Translation.*

Bartsch(S.) Pp. lviii + 400. London: Profile Books, 2020. Cased, £16.99. ISBN: 9781788162678.

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*The Aeneid*, Vergil's epic Latin poem, which relates the legendary tale of the Trojan refugee Aeneas, needs little introduction, but this new translation by Dr Shadi Bartsch, Professor of Classics at the University of Chicago, has much to set it apart from other English translations. In her extensive and detailed introduction, Bartsch sets out her mission to reimagine and reinvigorate the translation whilst retaining the rhythm and measure of the original text. Bartsch argues that some existing translations, in their attempts to provide a direct and comprehensive translation, have

sacrificed much of the pace and meaning of the Latin text. In contrast, Bartsch's translation maintains Vergil's dactylic hexameter with no additional lines added or loss of meaning. In this translation, Bartsch's focus is therefore on providing interpretations that showcase the original cadence and meaning of Vergil's verse whilst placing the focus firmly on readability. As a reading experience, it certainly feels tight and succinct with none of the textual bloat that may be associated with some other *Aeneid* translations.

Assisted by the pacy and rapid flow of the translation, the framing of characters and events is also subtly different. Battle scenes feel immediate and brutal and the universal issues explored in the poem such as nationalism, colonialism, political upheaval, and prejudice feel current and relevant to modern contexts. Dido's famous suicide is also presented as not solely the result of a deep betrayal and a broken heart, but because of her sudden political vulnerability. This was an interpretation that was lost on me before now and served to reframe some of the traditional understandings of her character and actions.

There is a real sense of the modern about the translation, with echoes of Emily Wilson's 2017 translation of *The Odyssey*, although the feminist aspects of Wilson's particular translation are not as obviously apparent here. The provision of extensive notes to explain particular contexts or other noteworthy elements of the text also serve to assist the modern reader in gaining a deeper understanding of the events of the text whilst offering stimulating food for thought.

The mission Bartsch sets out in her introduction has largely been achieved with this translation. Her translation is straightforward, measured and concise, without ever feeling sparse, and feels truly accessible to the lay reader without losing the core integrity and emotion of the story. This might perhaps be of less appeal to the serious Classics scholar but has the potential to offer much to those getting to grips with Classical texts in translation for the first time. This book is presented very much as a book to read for pleasure rather than being explicitly structured as a classroom text for study and its price point and format would perhaps make it unsuitable for most school contexts as an assigned text. This translation could be used in conjunction with other translations to highlight the different aims of particular translations and provoke discussion as to how texts are interpreted over time, or even be recommended to students as a text to read independently for enjoyment and personal interest outside of formal classroom study.

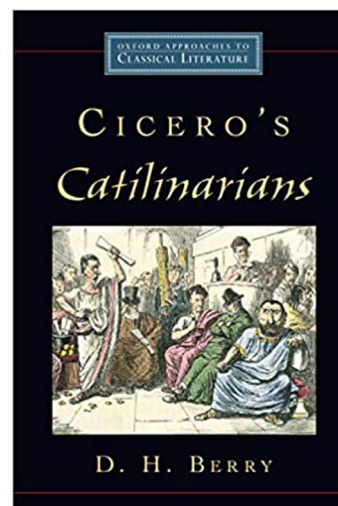
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### Cicero's Catilinarians.

Berry, D.H. Pp. 288. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. Paper £16.99. ISBN: 9780195326475

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The Oxford Approaches to Classical Literature series aims to produce student-friendly scholarly companions to the ever-growing library of affordable, excellent English translations of ancient Greek and Roman literature. The Oxford Approaches distinguish themselves from other similar 'companions' and 'introductions' in that a single accomplished scholar composes a dedicated interpretive monograph for each work of literature in question. In this case, D.H. Berry, who has previously

translated several of Cicero's speeches (including the *Catilinarians*) for Oxford's World's Classics, and has written an excellent commentary on the *Pro Sulla*, provides a timely, lively, fascinating scholarly

companion to Cicero's *Catilinarians*, one of the all-time favorites in Classics classrooms both in translation and in the original Latin.

As other reviews have already (aptly) judged its merit as a new piece of critical scholarship on the *Catilinarians*, and there is little need for much exposition on either Cicero or the Catilinarian speeches themselves, I shall here focus on the strengths of this book as a teaching document. For reasons I will outline in this review, I expect that this volume will become the standard accompaniment to the *Catilinarians* for classroom use.

First, Berry's introduction far surpasses all others in its inclusion of, and masterful, accessible treatment of, some of the material evidence for the career of Lucius Sergius Catilina in the years leading up to the famous conspiracy of 63 BCE. This greatly increases the classroom utility of Berry's treatment - providing practising teachers with excellent resources for multi-dimensional, rich lesson planning to support a study of the *Catilinarians*. As many teachers know, one of the very best ways to enliven and engage students of Classics is to situate our 'characters' (Cicero, Catiline, etc.) amid some of the most startling finds in the archaeological record.

In particular, Berry draws our attention to two spectacular (hoped-to-be genuine) campaign memorabilia from the consular and tribunate elections of 63 (for the year 62) in the possession of the Museo Nazionale Romano Terme di Diocleziano. Both are food bowls, thought to have been handed out at campaign 'dinners' on the streets, where, as the consumer ate, an inscribed message in support of one or the other candidate revealed itself. Images of these bowls are in the public domain at the Wikimedia Commons ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cato\\_and\\_Catilina\\_propaganda\\_cups.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cato_and_Catilina_propaganda_cups.jpg)). The one expresses support for Cato's standing for the Tribune of the Plebs (M CATO QUEI PETIT TRIBVNV PLEBEL) and Catiline's for the consulship of 62 (CASIVS LONGINV QUEI CATILINAE SVFRAGATVR). The bowls themselves, the politicking they imply, the informal, readily comprehensible Latin they represent, and Berry's excellent appendix on arguments for and against their authenticity, abound with rich possibilities for exciting classroom activities and substantive teaching interventions. Similarly rich possibilities attend other *realia* Berry considers, including two silver denarii commemorating the defeat of Catiline and a bronze statuette (ca. 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century CE) depicting a grammarian teaching the *First Catilinarian*.

Second, this volume succeeds where many other volumes falter in interweaving contemporary and classical literary and political parallels in a way that is novel and grabs attention, but also makes for interesting sustained comparison (rather than for a gimmick). In particular, to begin his analysis of the *First Catilinarian*, Berry makes an unexpected comparison. He suggests that, in many respects, we ought to read the *Catilinarians* as we would read Piers Morgan's 2005 memoir, *The Insider: The Private Diaries of a Scandalous Decade*. Berry continues:

There are clear parallels between Morgan's *Diaries* and Cicero's *Catilinarians* ... [T]he *Catilinarians*, like the diaries, purport, in their form, to be something they are not: they are not verbatim records of Cicero's original speeches. Like the diaries, they were written up after an interval of some years and contain anachronisms and distortions. But the *Catilinarians* can easily be read as though they are the original speeches, because they have been written as though they are; and as long as readers are aware that they are not, they are unlikely to be led seriously astray. (p.86)

After this, Berry fleshes out this interpretive stance more precisely (and in a way more familiar to mainstream classical scholarship), but this (now) helpful comparison is clearly imprinted

on the mind of the reader. I can see this comparative illustration doing a lot of interpretive legwork in a high school or college classroom, and will provide numerous opportunities for interdisciplinary discussion in the classroom on the authenticity, intent, and genre of the *Catilinarians*. What other unexpected parallels to the *Catilinarians* might we find in popular literature - even in tabloid tell-all's?

Third, Berry does the teacher a great service in including both Latin and English translations of crucial bits of Cicero's and Sallust's Catilinarian texts, and, in particular, includes a superb appendix with the surviving 'words' of Catiline, mined from the *Catilinarians* and the *Bellum Catilinae*. This helps to bring this infamous figure to life in a Latin classroom. Catiline can now play both 'devil' and 'devil's advocate' in Cicero's Catilinarian drama.

Last, Berry's review strikes a good balance between precise, helpful scholarly academic prose and the straightforward writing our students are sure to appreciate. In this way it represents an excellent bridge between classroom reading of the *Catilinarians* and the world of scholarship that surrounds them. This volume saves advanced students the frustration of reading something interesting about Cicero, Catiline, or the speeches and then wondering where they might find a reference to the *Catilinarians* or Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae*. But it also won't overwhelm students who have less interest in the details.

The aims of the Oxford Approaches series are well-represented here. Berry does not simply rehash running theories or historical approaches to the *Catilinarians*: he instead provides a novel, exciting supplementary document that breathes new life into them. Teachers of Latin and Classics will appreciate the numerous rich lesson plans pre-made, as it were, awaiting in these pages. More important: students will appreciate them even more.

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## Selections from Virgil's *Aeneid*, Books 7–12. A Student Reader.

Carter (A.) Pp.vi + 237. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. Paper, £16.99. ISBN: 978-1-350-13625-0.

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This scholarly but accessible edition completes Ashley Carter's journey through Virgil's *Aeneid*, and it is immediately obvious to anyone reading it, that he loves Virgil's writing. The format of this edition mirrors that of *Selections from Virgil's Aeneid, Books 1–6* (Bloomsbury Academic 2020), and would for me be a must-have in the book-cupboard of any school. The helpful background section on Virgil and the *Aeneid* can be used not only for Latin students but is a good summary for those embarking on Classical Civilisation courses who are trying to understand how poetry was regarded in the ancient world. The individual synopses of each book, at the beginning of this edition would also be of use to Classical Civilisation students; however, the real focus of this selection is Latin students and the clear explanation on metre along with a section on word order and literary