Despite writing as something of an outsider - the genre having been traditionally dominated by German archaeological experts, who have been excavating Olympia since 1875 - Barringer has given us a first-in-its-field, English-language analysis that is little short of magisterial. Stating her intent to be one wherein she provides her readership with a 'holistic interpretive' (introduction – page 5) study that moves through material, social, historical, political and religious synchronic considerations (i.e. a cultural context or anthropological approach), *Olympia: A Cultural History* ultimately rewards us with a cumulative diachronic sweep across more than 1200 years of stratified complexity. This is a task she acknowledges 'has rarely been done for any archaeological site in ancient Greece' (introduction – p. 5) and given the singular prestige of Olympia to the ancient Greco-Roman world and the vast amounts of knowledge Barringer had to digest to produce this text it might be well be considered self-evident as to why.

To guide her readership through this interpretation of the immense amounts of evidence she has processed, the scholar has imposed a chronological order to her chapters that is prefaced by a simple chronology (page xvii). While the first four of these central chapters cover the earliest known Greek use of the site through to the end of the Hellenistic period, the final two chapters are just as intriguing: respectively entitled 'Roman Olympia' and 'The Last Olympiad', both chapters richly reappraise the new layers of meaning imposed upon the ancient site with the invasion of a foreign enemy and then their Christian descendants. While nearby Sparta may have become something of a 'theme park' for the martially-obsessed Roman visitor to the Peloponnese, Olympia retained its lustre as the premier sporting location for the conquerors of Greece. As she points out on page 296: 'Earlier scholarly claims of decline in Roman Olympia are unfounded… Roman preferences for artistic display and commemoration required changes, and the shift in power westward to Rome meant that Olympia's substantial renown was now harnessed and exploited by a new population.' In the final of her six central chapters, Barringer also argues that the prohibition of non-Christian worship by Theodosius in 393 C.E. did not – contrary to many a generalisation – necessarily bring about an abrupt or instantaneous end to the pagan games held in honour of Zeus: 'There is no clear evidence of a last Olympiad, a final festival, nor is there, unsurprisingly, a single instant when the site stops being pagan and becomes exclusively Christian' (p. 237).

In actuality, as encouraged as Barringer is to attempt new interpretations of the evidence through her cultural approach, she is also just as forthright with acknowledging the many 'known unknowns' that still litter the interpretative fields clustering around this extraordinarily significant location. From the still-misunderstood intersections of the Pelops myth and the founding of the first Games (or should they be attributed to Heracles?) to the ongoing ambiguities hedging around so many aspects of the Altis, to the precise day or even decade when the ancient Olympics were crushed under the weight of a Christian singularity – before they would be so famously revived under Baron Pierre de Coubertin in our modern era – Barringer's openness to posing the right questions is as satisfying as the wealth of answers she provides. She actually ends chapter six with a weighty passage filled with such acknowledged but unanswered mysteries, and then hopes 'that the holistic, diachronic and synchronous methodology and scope of this study will provide a model for exploration of other Greek sanctuaries and sites' (p. 244).

As a frequent visitor to the extraordinary site of Olympia (and having now had published a historical fiction novel on the birth of the ancient Greek Games), I eagerly awaited this review dispatch of Barringer's hardcover work. It did not disappoint. In fact, it greatly exceeded my expectations, despite having read a few minor quibbles raised by other reviewers. It was also rarely so dense that it would leave a lay reader confused, while maintaining its scholarly rigour and merits throughout. While Zanes may have been erected at Olympia to permanently shame those caught out cheating at the premier ancient Greek *agones*, Berringer's work is both a monument to those who once achieved the extraordinary Olympic honour of being allowed to erect semi-godlike imagery of themselves within the Altis and may well be worthy of such *kleos* itself.

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The Facility and Other Texts – Re-imagining Antigone

Bleiman (B.), McCallum (A.), Webster (L.) (edd.) Pp. 160. ills. London: English & Media Centre, 2022. Paper, £20. ISBN: 978-1-9061017-0-1

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Classical reception studies having blossomed in this century, it is no surprise that a book of modern, literary, responses to Sophocles' *Antigone* has been produced. That four of the five authors are women comes as no surprise either, since Antigone's stance has usually been considered as much a feminist as an ethical protest.

This collection consists of poetry, one dramaturgical response to the original play and two fine and thought-provoking short stories. To be frank, the poetry, by Valerie Bloom, Inua Ellams and Barbara Bleiman, is of varying quality, although Bleiman's concept of an epistolary response from Antigone to later teenage female protesters ('dear girls of the future') is a striking and successful one, I think.

The play, *The Facility*, by Sarah Hehir, transfers the Greek story to a modern prison and, while it takes some liberties with original characters, harbours a powerful, visceral originality; relatively simple language is underlaid by a constant rhythmic force and unobtrusive rhyming. The book as a whole sets out to provoke response in its readers, especially those encountering the Antigone story or Greek drama for the first time; to that end, this play will be very successful.

Both stories are engaging and, like the drama, stay long in one's memory. Bleiman's own story, *Being Antigone*, involves a troubled teenage girl; she finds her voice in a performance of the Greek play, despite a difficult family background, thanks in part to a caring teacher. We are nudged to see the protagonist, Alicia, as Antigone throughout (she has a sister called Izzy). The story is packed with subtle touches and has one or two surprising turns.

The second story, *I Heard One Cry in the Night*, is a real *tour de force* from Phoebe Roy; its use of the Sophoclean start-point is original, enigmatic and genuinely surprising. Any précis of the story here will ruin that surprise (although the title supplies a clue), but it is beautifully and knowingly written, is full of ancient and modern nuance and is given pace by division according to ancient Theban months!

Each contribution is followed by a reflection from its author, which might answer some students' questions. There is a brief synopsis of the background and of the Sophoclean play. There are also two Introductions, one for teachers and one for students. The only part which does not work are the monochrome photos from a workshop on *The Facility* at Rochester Grammar School; they show and add nothing, I'm afraid, of value.

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Virgil, Aeneid XII. A Selection

Burbidge (J.) (ed.) Pp. viii + 176. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. Paper, £16.99. ISBN: 978-1-350-05921-4

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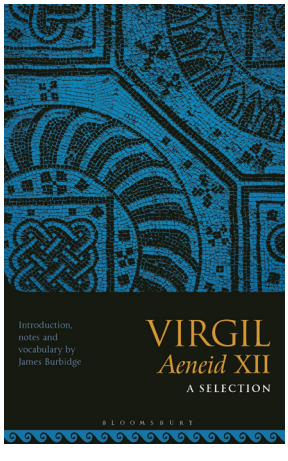

On the whole, this is an extremely useful and very well-written commentary on Book 12 of Virgil's *Aeneid* which would benefit any teacher of A Level Latin. As a side note, it would be useful if there was the possibility of an electronic download of the Latin text to aid in the creation of a teacher's own resources and avoid typing the text out. Online Latin texts are error-prone and have slight variations, such as *adscire* for *ascire* (*Aeneid* 12. 38), which make looking words up harder as they seem not to be in the glossary.

Burbidge offers a comprehensive and very readable introduction to both the historical context and content of the *Aeneid*. He rightly notes the roots of Aeneas' story in the *Iliad* and how other Greek writers mention 'Aeneas' movements in exile' (p.6) – although this is surely a missed opportunity to give the names of a few of these writers, which might perhaps have given an enthusiastic Latin student something to investigate further and, if nothing else, would certainly have piqued my own interest. Nevertheless, Burbidge's explanation of the importance of war, and thus of the second half of the *Aeneid* as a whole, is convincingly linked to Virgil's declaration that 'this [the story of the war in Italy] is a greater work I now set in motion' (*Aeneid* 7.45). The summary of the events of Book 12 is excellent and accompanied by references to the lines being summarised.

Burbidge follows his summary of the story with what initially seems an introduction to the literary style of *Aeneid* 12, focusing on the importance of speeches, character and emotion. He argues for the importance of speeches as tools to convey strong emotion in epic as a whole and especially the *Aeneid*; for example, in the poem as a whole, Turnus gives 29 speeches and 12 of these are in Book 12 (p.15), underlining the importance of this book above all for building the character of Turnus before his ultimate downfall and for underlining his emotional volatility. Burbidge also devotes a section to an analysis of the final duel, interweaving discussion of literary convention and historical context in the controversy of whether Aeneas was just. He then considers the involvement of the gods, then returns to Virgil's style to consider simile, metaphor, hyperbole and sound; one might suggest that this would more naturally follow the section on speeches, character and emotion as it seems a touch out of place here.

The introductory section concludes with a discussion of the difficulties with Virgil's language and the metre of the poem. 'Difficulties of language' sets out a rationale for the vocabulary provided then deals with several technicalities of Virgil's style which Burbidge deems most likely to challenge A Level readers: ellipsis, syncopation, the historic present, adjectives as adverbs, and singular for plural. These are well-explained, although he then lists the more complex terminology of literary criticism which he says may confuse the reader without definitions – definitions, or at least some form of glossary, would have been helpful here.

The commentary notes are, on the whole, excellent and complement the text well. They tend more towards language support but also provide insight into literary analysis. For example, Burbidge's comment on the etymology of *fulminat* (*Aeneid* 12. 654) underlines the link to Jupiter's *fulmina* (thunderbolts) and how this emphasises the 'terrifying impression he [Aeneas] has made on the Latin forces' (p.76). A student might then further develop this analysis by considering the implications in terms of divine support of linking Aeneas to Jupiter. Burbidge also comments on the presence of characters in lines 10–80, pointing out that five people seem to be present and that 'by choosing not to indicate this [their presence] until each character becomes involved, Virgil is able to generate some additional drama from the unexpectedness of their appearance' (p.47).

Simpler and less idiomatic translations are sometimes needed, such as 'washed [it] away' rather than 'washed away the area in front' for *proluit* on line 686. Indeed, line 680 suggests taking *hunc … furorem* as the direct object of *furere* which is very unnatural in English, but my students ended up taking it as accusative of respect as neither translation suggested in the glossary (or anywhere else for that matter) suits a direct object. In the glossary, idiomatic translations or ones that suit the context are provided. To avoid confusion, a more literal translation could also be helpful or challenging – it might also avoid confusion if a word is encountered in a different context. The tendency towards an idiomatic translation is also sometimes at the expense of meaning; *referor* (line 37) is translated as "slip back" despite its passive voice and arguably carries more the sense of someone else bringing Latinus back and making him hesitate. We therefore miss out on the nuance