ideas and thinkers. But the *Companion* certainly offers more than enough, in quality and quantity, to assist these readers in undertaking such a project by themselves.

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General

There are two ways to present courses on learning ancient languages. First comes the all-singing, all-dancing, language-learning-is-fun approach, with multicoloured text and lots of pictures; then there is the traditional, tell-it-how-it-is, pictures-and-coloured-boxes-aren't-going-to-make-it-any-easier-to-do-what-you-have-to-do school of language acquisition. In its presentation, *Classical Latin. An Introductory Course* by J. C. McKeown appears to be located within the old-school textbook category, but manages nevertheless to exude a sense of the fun of learning Latin.[110] Chapter 1 opens without frills or fanfare with the first conjugation, and the course proceeds methodically through conjugations and declensions until we reach the promised land of subjunctives and impersonal verbs. In each chapter, grammar is helpfully reinforced with linguistic exercises and extended passages for reading. The book is designed as a one-year course for undergraduate beginners and covers a lot of ground very thoroughly. This will be a useful addition to any teacher's shelf and a helpful tool for the more mature beginner of Latin. It is the only book I have ever encountered that is jointly dedicated to an author's wife and dogs (two Missouri Fox Trotters called Maev and Tanz). *Epic and History*, edited by David Konstan and Kurt Raaflaub (part of an ongoing series of 'comparative histories'), is a volume of collected essays focused on the relationship between narrative poetry and history, and highlighting some of the diverse ways in which the past is memorialized as a cultural product.[111] The topic is one of great interest for Classicists but what makes this book important is the fact that the theme is taken beyond the confines of the familiar worlds of Greece and Rome into less familiar territory, from Hittite epic to South African Ngumi praise poetry. Out of twenty-four chapters, only four are concerned with Greek and Roman epic. The broad cross-cultural and transhistorical approach (stretching over more than four thousand years) makes for a stimulating read, posing questions such as: 'is there a single definition [of epic] that can embrace the varieties of narrative poetry (and prose) produced in the several societies under consideration, from Sumer to South Africa?' (1); 'to what extent is it safe to infer that [written] compositions are the culmination of an earlier (or ongoing) oral tradition?' (1); 'do the epic narratives themselves change as the tradition in which they are embedded is appropriated by different interests within the society, or as one cultural form gives way to another?' (5). It is very good to be reminded that epic is more than 'just' Homer and Virgil, and one is able to return to the familiar territory of Classical epic with a new sense of

[110] *Classical Latin. An Introductory Course*. By J. C. McKeown. Indianapolis, IN, Hackett Publishing Co. Pp. 500. Paperback £28.95, ISBN: 978-0-87220-851-3.

[111] *Epic and History*. Edited by David Konstan and Kurt A. Raaflaub. Chichester and Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. Pp. xiv + 442. Hardback £85, ISBN: 978-1-4051-9307-8.

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perspective and fresh questions. From epic and history to universal history: *Historia Mundi. Studies in Universal Historiography*, edited by Peter Liddel and Andrew Fear, brings together fifteen contributions from an international group of scholars (the fruit of a 2007 conference on the same topic).[112] The focus of the volume is 'universal history', however widely that might be understood and interpreted both by ancient historians and by modern scholars. Broadly speaking, universal history seeks to transcend specific chronological narratives in order to explore larger historical themes and patterns. The collection aims not merely to examine (and interrogate) how this notion was conceived by the ancient historians of Greece and Rome, but also to consider the reception of the idea in later antiquity and its continuing influence on modern interpretations of ancient historiography. Polybius understandably looms large, but attention is also given to Diodorus, Strabo, Cato the Elder, and Velleius Paterculus, and even to the Latin poet Ennius and his *Annales*. The theme of universal history is also considered with regard to early Christian and Islamic historiography. The collection concludes with two articles on the reception of universal history in the modern era, examining the writings of Hegel and Spengler. In *Authorship and Cultural Identity in Early Greece and China. Patterns of Literary Circulation*, Alexander Beecroft uses a cross-cultural analysis of Homeric epic (and archaic lyric) and the early Chinese Canon of Songs in order to explore the transformation of oral poetry into literary text.[113] At the heart of this analysis lies the figure of the author and his representation in, for example, poetic biographies such as the Lives of Homer and the Zuozhuan. This biographical material has often been dismissed as lacking in any real value – being seen as entertaining but largely fabulous or fictitious. As Beecroft describes, however, 'it is more fruitful to read these scenes of authorship as evidence of poetic ideology (explicit or implicit) than to read them merely as generated by the *biographical fallacy*' (4). For Beecroft, then, the figure of the author represented in these texts deserves to be taken seriously, as a bridge between the locally based and anonymous tradition of oral poetry and the pan-cultural literary tradition. The idea of the author not only facilitates the transition from oral to literate poetic culture but thereby encourages a wider sense of cultural identity within the worlds of both Greece and China. *Taste or Taboo. Dietary Choices In Antiquity* by Michael Beer is a study of food as a key to ancient identity.[114] In this it offers nothing new, though unlike most recent literature on food and identity, which has been concentrated largely in archaeological discussions, *Taste or Taboo* returns the focus to literature, following Gowers' *The Loaded Table* (1993) and others. The central theme is the restriction (voluntary or enforced) of food as an important signifier for cultural, social, ethnic, or religious identity. The book starts with a discussion of the economic restriction of food in the diet of the poor; there follow chapters on, among other subjects, Pythagorean vegetarianism, beans, and Jewish food restrictions. In each instance, it is argued that the restriction or denial of food, or certain kinds of food,

[112] *Historiae Mundi. Studies in Universal Historiography.* Edited by Peter Liddel and Andrew Fear. London, Duckworth, 2010. Pp. ix + 244. Hardback £50, ISBN: 978-0-7156-3833-0.

[113] *Authorship and Cultural Identity in Early Greece and China. Patterns of Literary Circulation*. By Alexander Beecroft. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. ix + 328. Hardback £50, ISBN: 978-0-521-19431-0.

[114] *Taste or Taboo. Dietary Choices In Antiquity*. By Michael Beer. Totnes, Devon, Prospect Books, Devon, 2010. Pp 152. Paperback £12, ISBN: 978-1-903018-63-7.

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was an integral part of the creation of social identities. Fikret Yegül's *Bathing in the Roman World* draws heavily on the author's 1995 *Baths and Bathing in the Classical World*, although it includes new data from significant recent discoveries, and it aims at greater emphasis on social history.[115] In this latter aspect it is slightly disappointing: the cultural significances of bathing are despatched in the first four brief chapters and there is little use of theories of the socialization of the body. Treatment of literary accounts is brief, although the important civic and social dimension is often emphasized. The two following chapters deal with the history and technology of baths (heating and water supply). Chapter 7 discusses baths of Rome individually, and Chapters 8–11 document the baths of the empire, following a traditional, centrifugal, arrangement of Roman material. These five chapters are largely descriptive and rich in architectural detail, and contain digressions on interesting issues that arise. The book, aimed at an undergraduate audience, ends with two fascinating and thought-provoking chapters on the transformation of bathing in post-Roman, Christian, and Islamic worlds, and post-classical Europe. To those on the outside looking in, the world of Classical scholarship must sometimes seem like a strange and daunting place. The fifth volume of the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*, edited by T. Corsten, is part of an ongoing project that aims to provide a comprehensive listing of all named individuals from the ancient Greek-speaking world (from the eighth century BC to the seventh century AD).[116] In order to amass this information, all available literary material has to be searched – from inscriptions on pots to poems on papyrus. The present volume covers Asia Minor, in particular the ethnically and culturally diverse areas of Pontos, Bithynia, Mysia, the Troad, Aiolis, Ionia, and Lydia. This is clearly not a work for the fair-weather Classicist, but it is an integral part of what makes Classics the remarkable discipline that it is.

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[115] *Bathing in the Roman World*. By Fikret Yegül. Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. 256. 104 b/w illustrations. Paperback £17.99, ISBN: 978-0-521-54962-2.

[116] *A Lexicon of Greek Personal Names Volume V.A. Coastal Asia Minor. Pontos to Ionia*. Edited by T. Corsten. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2010. Pp. 496. Hardback £125, ISBN: 978-0-19-956743-0.

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