

*SCRIBBLERS, SCVLPTORS, AND SCRIBES: A Companion to Wheelock's Latin and Other Introductory Textbooks*, by Richard A. LaFleur, HarperCollins (2010) p/b 307 pp £11.99 (ISBN 978-0-06-125918-0)

Tied closely to *Wheelock's Latin*, this supplementary reader has 40 chapters with texts in 3 categories: *inscriptiones*, *proverbia et dicta*, and (appearing sporadically at first) *litteratura*. Each chapter has a brief introduction and a reminder of the new grammar which is followed up at the end of the chapter with a task (mostly demanding the identification and listing of new features). The literature sections are dominated by short epigrams of Martial, although we are also treated to some Sallust and Apicius and in the later chapters passages from a variety of authors such as Catullus, Pliny, Gellius, Cicero and Frontinus. The *proverbia et dicta* are culled from various mainstream authors but Publilius Syrus' *sententiae* and the *dicta Catonis* feature prominently, the latter's single liners (*familiam cura* and the like) being particularly useful in the very early chapters. Although this section risks appearing monotonous and about as enticing as reading a book of quotations, pearls of wisdom can be selected as appropriate for the students – *neque mittatis margaritas vestras ante porcos* (Matthew 7.6 on p.158)! References are given for each aphorism so that the teacher can easily put them in context. Help with vocabulary and background is provided for all the readings, but without line breaks: each lemma (in bold) is preceded by a dash, the meaning follows in italics and then come derivatives, distinguished by inverted commas. This arrangement can appear cramped and not very easy to follow, but at least it helps keep the book to a reasonable size.

The prominence given to inscriptions, graffiti and other non-literary texts are mainly instrumental in giving the book its distinctive character. Not only are they carefully chosen to shed light on daily life (and death) but they are full of linguistic interest too. Thus as early as ch.1 we meet *salve lucru* and *Marcus Spedusa amat*, the muted *m* missed off the accusatives. Epitaphs are often touching: a mother laments with the address to her daughter *reliquisti mammam tuam gementem, plangentem, plorantem*. Hardly surprising as the girl was but 15 years, 3 months, 11 days and 7 hours old. *Fatus malus* (sic) indeed.

Although this comes from the Wheelock stable, it should appeal not only to those following *Wheelock's Latin*, but also to all other students of Latin. As a class reader, it presents an attractive selection of literary and non-literary texts with copious illustrations, and if selectively used, it need not be too time-consuming. As a library book, it will offer a rich resource for exploration by learners at all levels. L. is a judicious guide who has enhanced the Wheelock experience considerably with this attractive companion.

Alan Beale